
The Natural

FANATICK,

Chas. OR, *Hemph.*
Reason Consider'd

In its Extravagancy in RELIGION,
and (in some late Treatises)
Usurping the Authority of
the Church and Councils,

By JOHN WARLEY B. D. late
Fellow of Clare-Hall in Cambridg.

Sic si homines rationem bono consilio a Diis immortalibus datam, in fraud. m. malitiamq; Convertunt, non dari illam, quam dari humano generi melius fuit: Cicer. de nat. Deor. lib. 3. Satiùs fuerit nullam omnino nobis a Dijs immortalibus datam esse rationem, quam tantam cum perniciè datam, ibidem.

London Printed, and are to be sold by
Thomas Basset at the George in Fleet-
street, 1676.

IMPRIMATUR.

2. Novemb.
1675.

Geo. Hooper
R^{mo.} D^{no.} Arch.
Cant. à Sacr. Do-
mesticis.

TO THE
Right Honourable
HENEAGE Lord FINCH,
Baron of DAVENTRY
AND
Lord High Chancellor of *England*.

May it please your Lordship



*Though Dedications as
much as Prefaces may
seem formal imperti-
nencies; yet they cease
to be such when the
Patronage is as the Broad Seal of
England, to Authorize and li-
cense the Examination of the Li-
bertine; though in such method as
may seem unkind and unnatural
to Humanity in the discovery of
Reasons defect, and exposing it to*

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the publick view naked and intoxicated. This way of arguing is so far justifiable as it is more necessary at some times to declare that men are mad, fools, and bewitch'd in their search for Religion, than to flatter them with soft compellations of men of sober minds, dispos'd for reasonable service, and critically wise to Salvation. This method is also commended by Christ's praise, who disputing with the Pharisees and Opinionative formalists of the Jewish Church, answers their questions with questions, and at the same time confounded them whilst he inform'd them by retorting their folly, and turning the edge of their own troublesome queries on themselves; which was the most
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proper way to silence a Pragmatical Jew. The present state of Religion as it is to be found in factious minds makes this method seasonable for this age, which is full of Reasoning Ze'ots (the secular Fanatics) who must be Catechiz'd in the first Elements of their natural Religion, though in a stile as rough as that by which Arnobius discovered the folly of the Gentiles.

These considerations, I hope, may render this bold address more pardonable, and the Tract less liable to censure, which being presum'd I cannot but think it necessary, that I declare which were the first motives which commended the task to my thoughts, and what directed it to your most Honourable Patronage

Libertinism exalting it self above
Sacred Authority, and Usurping
its power, pleading Reasons claim
and right to the spiritual Judica-
ture; and it being seasonably checkt
by that Oration which made Eng-
land (in its Representatives) its
Auditor, when it captivated both
ear and mind with sweetness and
vigour, and (as it is the property of
Eloquence) commanded whilst it
perswaded : I thought it would not
appear an impertinent peice of cu-
riosity in a private person to inquire
into, and examin the composition of
that Leaven with which Faction
swells, and turbulently ferments.

I was also more confident in this
address to your Lordship, whilst I
consider'd that some of the matter
of

of these papers, when spoken, as duty call'd me, as well as written, found encouragement from the Right Honourable Heneage Earl of Winchilsea my very good Lord; presuming they might find the same favourable entertainment whilst they apply themselves to the same name, which is now famous both for Forreign and Domestick administration of the affairs of the Kingdom; For it is no contradiction in my hopes to conclude that Souls may be allied as well as bodies, and that there may be Affinity of Opinions as well as Persons: and the same singular Candour and Humanity may run in the same blood as Hereditary to the Family.

This Task was also encouraged

as necessary, whilst I consider'd that several interested persons cloakt their practise under the thin film of a pretended Religion, which might exempt them from the imputation of being Atheists (which is a name so odious as would effectually stifle their designs and make their practise nauseous) and seem'd careless whether Christian Religion, as it is said of Astræa, return'd again to Heaven; so that the world was possessed with a belief. that they acknowledged the Deity which they would have prov'd and worshipped by their Rational Method.

Now that such might not impose upon credulous minds, by perswading them they are truly Religious. I thought it proper to unmask them,
by

by shewing that they are so far from being so, that by that method they cannot intitle themselves to the names of Theists.

These men also pleas'd themselves, or at least others (with an empty name of a new kind of faith, which they did no more understand than the Exorcist doth the Sacred words abus'd in his Charm) making it natural Reason with an object brought nigher by Revelation, and to supply its defect have impudently medled with the object God himself representing him as a Proteus to be ador'd in several shapes, or as a Picture to be seen and worshipped in divers forms according to the various situation of the Spectators, by which arbitrary Transfiguration of Christ in each mans brain he
will

*will be as much abus'd in mens
phancies as the Deity was in the
Heathens Idolatrous way of worship.
It need not be call'd to your Lord-
ships mind that such extravagant
liberty will exceed all former Heresie
and Schism, which seem more modest,
for they were never contracted into a
more narrow compass than an As-
sembly, or congregation, but this
makes (in its Ecclesiastical Anar-
chy) each Zelot an independent-
Church.*

*But I was not only led to this
Task by the wild projects of Extra-
vagant brains, but by the practice of
men of more sober minds, who (per-
haps) observing the predominant
humour and prevailing prejudices
of some against Ecclesiastical Au-
thority, as Tyrannical over Consci-
ences,*

entes, out of their great zeal for the Church, and Christian resolution (like Commanders disarm'd in fight snatch a Sword from their Enemies hand, when ill success deprived them of their own) dispute with the Atheist upon his own principles and fight against him with his arguments, which way hath been little succesful. And it is no great wonder, for Divine Authority (which is excluded in such disputes) sets the edge on the spiritual sword, & is the strength of that arm which weilds it. All natural arguments so managed are as some vicious Syllogisms which have all the propositions, but conclude nothing. But this being not so easily believ'd as said in This Treatise, Reason and Religion dispute their rights to be
judg

judg in spiritual matters. This method is altogether necessary: for the Reasoner will never believe he is lawfully condemn'd, if he have not liberty to bring in all natural evidence in the Trial, which large concession will make him know the vanity of liberty falsly so call'd, and subjugate his unruly mind, playing like a fish which is wearied with the line of his vain imaginations, who scorn'd all ties of Laws and Religion. As subjection to Governours is never more effectually recommended by any mere rational argument than that which comes with this consideration of the necessity of being obedient to Magistrates, because humane nature is not so able to provide for it self in solitude as in Souldiers

cieties; So the extravagant Reasoners in Religion are not any way better reduced to obedience to Ecclesiastical Authority, than by contemplating the vanity of their own imaginations. For that prospect of their own ignorance will make Reason so obsequious and tame, that though Ecclesiastical Laws (as the Greek Law-giver saies of Laws in general) are lookt on as Cobwebs; yet they will not think it their interest to break them.

This consider'd, I hope may supplant all censure which might condemn this way of arguing as prejudicial to Religion by rendring arguments, which were design'd to fortifie it, weakned by too severe an inquisition, for this method doth no more violence to Religion, than a
Chirurgion

*Chirurgion doth to his Patient
whilst he stretches the Sinews in
order to set a bone which was out of
its place. Neither shall I fear
that these Papers will be lookt upon
as vainly speculative, seeing the
Dedication directs the Reader to so
eminent an Example, which alone
(though the Church was not pro-
tected by civil power and truth na-
ked in that sense which the factious
Adversary would have it) is able to
win practice and engage all Chri-
stian obedience, which is desired and
design'd, (so far as these Papers can
promote it) by*

My L^d.

Your Lordships most
humble and obedient
Servant

John Warly.

An Advertisement.

SO often as the word *Reasoner* occurs in this Tract, it is to be understood of the Author of the Treatise of *Humane Reason* or of any other who is conducted by his principles, and so often as the word *Reconciler* is us'd, it is to be understood of the Author of the considerations of *the Reconcilableness of Reason and Religion*, other Authors antient and Modern are either plainly cited or so discoverable by their matter, that nothing more need be said by way of Explanation.

ERRATA.

Read as streight an Union page 16. for who read
which p. 34. r. *συνεκτός* p. 35. r. *ἀκαταληψία* p.
65. dele they 73. r. *θεός* p. 83. *μικρό* p. 83. r. *παντοδύνακτος*
p. 85. *ὁ δὲ* p. 90. r. terminated p. 92. r. & p. 104. r. *ζηλωτής*
108 r. *Minucius Felix* 112. dele that 115. r. as much p.
116. dele least r. or p. 118. r. Erroneous p. 139. dele not
and r. are not p. 153. r. scales p. 162. for which r,
when 170. r. *σωφερόνων* p. 173. for that r. what 178.
for nor r. now, p. 180. Dele not 184.



REASON in some late
Treatises being set up
Umpire in Religion,
challenging Appeals
to be made to it, as the
highest Tribunal, and being asser-
ted with priviledges, which are
exalted above *Pelagian* invention,
or what any other Heresie could
project. And one Article of the
Church of *England* being threat-
ned by some positions which di-
rectly oppose it, by saying; *That*
a man may be sav'd by the Law or
B *Sect*

See which he professeth, so that he diligently frame his life according to that Law, and the light of nature. I thought my self obliged to examine the foundation on which this natural infallibility was built, which is supported by these positions, which say; That faith is an assent given to Religious matters, the understanding and will being no otherwise assisted, than they are in drawing other Conclusions.

And that Reason requires no other assistance in the act of faith, than the proposal of that which is to be believed, which the Reasoner calls the near approach of the object being brought nigher by Revelation.

The former account of faith is
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imperfect, and attended with many false conclusions, which are deductions from it ; amongst many, let this be considered ; That no man (according to that description of faith) can be an Infidel , who hath read holy Scripture, or its contents or matter proposed to his understanding ; And as it is an impossibility that *Euclid* should not render the intelligent Reader a *Mathematician*, so it is equally impossible, that the contents of holy Scriptures proposed to the Infidel, should not make him a Convert : This is necessarily inferred from the former position, and shall be more illustrated by a supposition ; suppose therefore an *Ethnic* made so much a Proselite

to the true Religion by reading holy Scriptures, that he gives assent to matters of Religion no further, than upon Examination he shall find them agreeable or congenial to his Reason, or (to speak another Phrase,) *Reason can confess them to be true*: and let him be suppos'd to speak like the Samaritan-Woman in another case; saying, I do not believe the Creation of the World, the incarnation of Christ, and other matters of faith, because of the evidence of the Divine Records, but because I presume my belief will be ratifi'd and approv'd by my reason, which is naturally bound to confess them, when they are propos'd, it will appear upon experiment, that he is a wavering
and

and weak Convert, not far removed from infidelity. This supposition is agreeable to the Reasoners account of faith, and that term of art which expresseth it, calling *understanding and will the Elements of which faith is compounded*. In examining which I intend not to be so critical as he, in interpretation of *words* for *signification* will equally admit of such critical exercise, but rather take it in the common acceptation. *That out of which bodies are made, and into which is their last Return or Resolution*; which, being accommodated to the Reasoners sense, will conclude, that Religious knowledge was no otherwise in mans mind than *Idea's*: or some

dormant knowledg to be excited by
 propofal of holy Scriptures, or as
 letters to make words to be fram'd
 by the Divine *Pædagogy*, the Law
 and Gospel too being in his fenfe
 but as a School-mafter (not ac-
 cording to the Apostles meaning)
 to prompt the understanding.
 This is fo false, that it may be con-
 futed by History, which faves, ma-
 ny perufed the Mofaical-Scrip-
 ture, and fome paſt critical judg-
 ments on them. *Longinus*, and o-
 thers, with the *Greek* Law-givers
 (though ſome of their knowledg
 ſeems borrowed from them) who
 muſt be in the Catalogue of Infi-
 dels. And later ages give ex-
 amples of this kind, many men
 who muſt be acknowledged to be
 Maſters

Masters of reason, being not able to reduce themselves to belief, according to the former method, which wanting the *Divine Testimony* to byass their wills and to command assent, left them in desperate Scepticism ; for though the contents of Religion are such as may be presum'd sufficient to command, or at least win assent ; yet the *medium* which begets this persuasion is taken of holy Scriptures, which faith, Reason in some sense must be *laid aside*, (which shall be more proved in its proper place) whilst it resigns it self to a more infallible conduct.

Let it be also consider'd, if the will and understanding are the Elements of Faith, that an *Ethnic*

laying aside the *Divine Testimony* and retiring to his reason, would be more confirm'd in his perswasion; As a Chymist asserts his principles and practical knowledge above that which *Theory* teacheth, whilst he Analyses or dissolves a body, by which he makes sense a witness of his reason, and gives evidence of the truth by both : or as the Mathematical knowledge challenges greater certainty, than that in other Sciences, which taking a Scheme asunder by demonstration and rebuilding it on the same principles, confidently and justly calls it true ; but the success is different in Religious cases, as in some curious contexture, which is defective by its too fine threads,
and

and not far remov'd from *nothing* when most tenderly unwoven.

To this, another consideration may be added, how it can be imagined that the Heathens should be ignorant of the contents of Religion, at least, so far as practical, seeing Reason is allow'd a Judge naturally qualified for decision of Religious controversies; and consequently able to comprehend matters of Faith, and in capacity to frame Religious precepts or notions without any assistance from without, *but only furnish'd with its own innate faculty*. For that as well as he who is set up as judge in all controversies must be supposed to understand the whole Law, though

though particular cases determine the sentence to some parts of it. Let this be illustrated by that fam'd instance of a Theorem revealed to *Pythagoras* by a Dæmon, which although acknowledged to be borrowed from Revelation, yet the principles, by which judgment was pass'd on it, were not derived from that *kind Spirit*, and it may be thought possible that the *Sophy* might have made the discovery without that Monitor, and himself proclaim the *ἰσχυρά*. This instance apply'd to the present case will force the Reasoner to confess: that it was possible that the *Ethnic* might have luckily discover'd the matter which Religion proposes to be believ'd,

liev'd, by his own faculties following their natural conduct, which cannot be granted.

If it is objected that a great part of Religion is to be found in Heathens writings. It may find an answer from this consideration, that no arguments taken from Pagans Books for the proof of the truth of Religion, can be said to prevail otherwise than by being probable and perswasive (and they borrowing their force from Christian Interpretations) and those which have influence on practice, notwithstanding the seeming affinity between Reason and Religion, are like Towers or Buildings, which at a great distance seem contiguous, which the eye by a nearer ap-

approach finds remov'd from their fallacious neighborhood.

That which is said may find another check from the Reasoner's fundamental position; which concludes, that it is a sufficient assistance to reason in act of faith, if the *object* be brought *nigher* by Revelation; which if true, he may impute Heathenish ignorance in matters of Religion, to no other cause but the want of holy Scriptures; and retort the force of the former considerations by proposal of this question; whether it is possible that the curious and secret Mechanism of nature in Animals and other Bodies, could be discern'd without a Microscope, which being deny'd may make it applicable

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ble to the former case? Revelation being as necessary for the begetting of faith in the Heathen, as a Glass for discerning the small parts of matter. This must not be deny'd, but if by Revelation, the bare proposal of holy Scripture is understood, as sufficient to command assent; this will be a necessary consequence, That the true Religion was not imbrac'd, or believ'd in several Ages, for no other reason than the *Sporades* (which were confusedly discern'd in the *Viá lacteá*) were not discern'd till *Galilæus* made the discovery. For as a Telescope was necessary for the discerning of the one, so the holy Scriptures for believing of the other, the want of
which

which cannot be thought the sole cause of infidelity, the contrary being demonstrable from the practice of the *Jews* (who must not altogether by one peremptory sentence be depriv'd of their Reason) who have not, and perhaps could not be reduc'd to belief, though conversant with holy writings, this makes way for this Disquisition.

Whether in the act of faith, the understanding is enlightned, and consequently the will determined in such manner as it cannot be by a mere natural conduct.

The affirmative of this may be proved, according to the method of the Schools, from this Topick of Gods concurse with man,
which

which alwayes leaves goodness as its effect, which must be called perfection, according to the meaning of the Character which was given of the whole Creation, that all that was made, was good, *viz.* Every Creature perfect in its kind, seeing therefore faith is the work of God on the understanding; 'tis past doubt, that it is improv'd, and the sight more perfect.

How it is perfected, shall be declared in another disquisition (in this place 'tis enough, if I remove prejudices, which the former assertion may create) by saying that the perfection which the Soul hath in the act of faith, is not such as advances its nature to an Angelical degree of knowledge; yet it hath
more

more than could be *the result of mere natural powers, guided by their own methods.* Neither must this perfection be restrain'd to *simple apprehensions or notions, but complex,* which would be as Ropes of Sand without any true connexion; which must be such, because matters of Religion transcend reasons highest pitch, which knows not how to compound its notions or thoughts, so as to make true propositions, as may appear from an instance in one fundamental. If this question be proposed to reason, whether God and Man could be in streight an union as they are in Christ's person, it must remain undetermined. And God and Man must stand in the
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proposition, as *Subje&* and *Prædiccate*, till Divine testimony comes as a *Copula*. To prevent such misprisions, this explanation may be added, *viz.* That by the perfection attributed to the Soul in the act of faith, no new faculties are to be suppos'd, that could transform its nature, and remove *humanity* to another *kind*. However that which is said, may make way for an objection; if the mind is thus perfected or inlightned to discern the truth of propositions, of which it must be ignorant, whilest guided or inform'd by its own natural evidence and conduct, all believers are Enthusiasts.

This is no necessary consequence of the former assertion:

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For

For *Enthusiasm* derives not its name from the *Divine concurrence* with the Soul in some particular acts, but when it comes at times, when it is not expected, and out of the common course and method, or when knowledge which seems extraordinary, such as a man could not attain to by use of his reason; and which he doth not understand when spoken. Now the improvement of the pious mans knowledge, which is acquir'd by regular means, which Religion commands to be us'd, deserves not the name of *Enthusiasm*. Neither can that extraordinary assistance promis'd to holy Councils and Synods, denominate them *Enthusiastick* in their defi-

definitions. But I will not urge this argument, seeing the Reasoner concludes Councils no otherwise assisted than by Reason, and no better qualified for finding truth than a *Senate* or *Parliament*; but further, examine the Reasoners position, which allows no more Divine assistance to Reason, but *the near approach of the object* represented in holy Scripture; or to speak in his Metaphor, that the eye of the Soul can discern all spirituals objects, external impediments being remov'd, and brought within the *Sphere of Vision*. This discerning faculty is such, that the Soul can no more pretend to be furnish't with it, than the *Batt* or *Owl* can be said

to have an eye as quick and as piercing as the *Eagle*, and as well dispos'd for vision, if nature had not plac'd its proper objects at too great a distance. Some *parts of matter* are so small, that it is impossible they should be discern'd; he deserves to be Chroni-
 cled a fool, who observing the discoveries made by Microscopes of small bodies (which nature could not see whilst unassisted by art, and she look't with her *own eyes*,) would attempt an invention of making discoveries of the parts and figures of them, of which the *Air* or *Wind* consist. Some objects are not visible, though as near as it is possible they can be. Not to speak much of Atoms and Mathe-
 matical

matical points, the one not to be discern'd by the *eye of the body*, the other not distinctly seen by *that of the mind*, as appears from numerous Controversies which arise from them, which are not so *trivial* or *useless*, but, that prudence can and hath made them subservient (as the strange *Phænomena's* of the Load-stone suggested by the *Reconciler*) to facilitate the belief of the existence of a *spiritual being*; by shewing that there are *beings* in nature, as well as those which Religion discovers, whose existence must be confess'd, though the objects are *invisible*, and confound both sense and reason in their search.

This defect of natural sight
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proceeds not from the want of the *near approach of the object*, as is demonstrable from the first prospect Religion takes, *viz. The being and nature of God* (who being brought as near as imagination can wish or propose ; for what object can be so near to the Soul, as an *Idæa*, which is connate with it, and inseparable from it?) is but confusedly discerned : besides the *ubiquity* of this object implies, it is near to every faculty which is able to discern it ; the World also being as a *Theater* in every part of which God is to be seen, yet the *notions of God*, which natural men frame in their brains, are as *ill Representations of him*, as *Pagans Idols*, whose monstrous

strous *Pageantry* owes its beginning to mans imperfect knowledg of the nature of Spirits, which is so far from comprehending the *Supreme*, that it cannot conclude the *being*, or *understand the manner of the existence of the inferior*, (*the Angels*) who are above mere humane knowledge.

But if this may be retorted, by saying, the natural ignorance of the existence and nature of Angels (whose *being*, reason cannot necessary conclude) doth not imply the ignorance of the Deity, whose existence is more evident, which must be granted ; (for as he who cannot discern an *Atom*, or the smallest visible part of matter, may see a *Mountain*, or greater ob-

ject, so humane Reason ignorant of *finite*, may discern an infinite spirit) yet it argues the imperfection of the sight, for he who cannot discern a *Mote* in a *Sun-beam*, cannot so distinctly discern the vast body of the *Sun*, and he who knows not the *ratio formalis*, or essence of the least part of matter, knows it not as it lyes in the great *Bulk* of the *Universe*. Let this be concluded, by saying, That as he who cannot distinctly see the small Sands, cannot so distinctly see the vast *Sea-shore*; so he who knows not the nature of *finite*, doth not distinctly discern that of an infinite spirit.

*To what degree of knowledge,
Reason, only following its own con-
duct,*

duſt, can lead its follower ; and how he can be ſaid to be a THEIST ?

Satisfaction will be given to all doubts, which can ariſe out of this inquiry, if theſe poſitions be prov'd. That Reason in its queſt concerning the *being* of God, and the manner of his worſhip, cannot arrive to a higher pitch of certainty than that of opinion. And that ſuch knowledge is ſo uncertain, that it cannot be conſiſtent with that firm aſſent which Religion commands.

For proof of the former, 'tis enough to direct the Reader to the precedent Diſquiſition, which ſhews how the *Reaſoner* puts himſelf in the condition or quality of an *Ethnick*. For though Revelation

Iation is allow'd, as necessary for the setting out his *Rational guide*, yet, whilst Reason is set up Judge of reveal'd propositions, which must be ratified by appeals made to it, nothing is left of Revelation but the name, and reason Consecrated by a Heavenly Title.

These premis'd, will make a more easie digression to the examination of the particular method and Rules, which the Reasoner prescribes his guide, *viz. Not to assent to any Conclusion, which cannot be prov'd by natural evidence.*

This direction observ'd by the guide, will give no better assurance of safe-conduct, than that which opinion affords, and in strictness of Language cannot in-
title

title him to the name of *Theist*, which shall be more largely prov'd. But before I speak to that part of this inquiry, I cannot but suggest my fear, that by this harsh conclusion I might be thought to condemn the great part of the world as *Atheists*, and to call *Gods goodness* in question, in not indowing man with such faculties, as could discern the Creator and trace a way to happiness, and by this position to take away the satisfactory method of solving doubts in Religion, viz. *That there is as much evidence of the Truth of Religion, as the matter of it is capable*, which would be insignificant, if Reason were not able to discern it. These
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prejudices shall be remov'd by the following discourse; I only name them here, least the Reader might think I was not sensible how many obstacles were in the way, before I could attempt the proof of the former proposition, and to desire him to pass over them, with a swift touch, as the Traveller tenderly goes over a *Quag-mire*, or *Quick-sand*, till he can find a more sure bottom, to which he may be conducted by weighing the several arguments Reason hath for the proof of the *being of a Deity*.

Amongst many, let that of the *French* Philosopher (who bid defiance to the *Sceptick*) take place, whose force consists in these

these particular positions. That the *Idea* of God, which is in mans mind, could not be fram'd by his invention; because the Soul cannot contrive the Model of a *being*, which is more perfect than it self. This being granted, that there is an *Idea* of God in mans mind, the truth of it is prov'd from the *goodness* of God, which cannot be imagin'd to have deluded his Creature with a false draught of himself. This argument is of so great force, that I know none so cogent, if it meet with a mind prædispos'd for the Reception of truth, but is not strong enough to beat the *Sceptick* off his ground, because the very finews of this argument borrow their strength from

from a supposition; one attribute of God being necessarily suppos'd, *viz.* *His goodness*, before the Reasoner can put himself in a capacity of arguing. However it must be granted, that supposition doth not destroy the certainty of finding truth; for to suppose Falsity in some cases, is a sure way to find Truth; as in the *Rule of false* in Arithmetick. But this method fails in this case, for in those Operations the suppositions are raz'd out, and laid by, when the work is perfected; but in this argument the supposition can never be laid aside, for the truth of the Conclusion depends on the *goodness* of God, as known to be such as would not impose on his Creature, which
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the *Sceptick* will look on as but suppos'd. If it be urged in favour of the former argument, That Reason concludes the *being* or *existence* of the Deity, and understands the attributes of God by rules equally certain, with those in the *Arithmetical instance*, seeing the Souls faculties are as a *Standard*, by which it can measure the Divine perfections, and find what is goodness or wisdom in God by measuring them with the notion or footsteps of them left in the mind.

The argument thus managed, must be acknowledged to be of great value, and serviceable to the *Casuit* in solution of doubts, but the defect of Reason being necessarily supplied with a supposition

(in

(in this way of arguing) without which mans faculties may be suspected as false, it is not probable the *Sceptick* will be perswaded out of his affected ignorance.

After this new Method let old arguments be consider'd, which seem more Catholick and easie, being drawn from the common *appearance* or *Phænomena's* of Nature, and observation of Providence, with those from other *Tor: picks*, by which the Soul is fetter'd, so that it cannot evade an assent to the *existence* of God; yet it will appear, that the strength and evidence of this argument cannot command that assent without confusion of Thoughts, which implies ignorance, and extravagancy, which

which are not tolerable in a Guide.

That argument which is most obvious, is drawn from the admirable Fabrick of the World, which must be allow'd to have its due force, when it meets with a ductile mind (far remov'd from Sceptical stiffness, made so by a Divine disposition for receiving Truth) without which it is so far from conducting men to the knowledge of God, that it will rather incline the mind to Idolatry: Heathens practice is an undeniable evidence of this Truth. For it may be a reasonable conjecture, that Idolatry took its rise from the gross consideration of Wisdom and Power, which appear'd in the lovely

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ly frame of the World, and afterward this power was divided and subdivided into several ranks of Gods and *Semi-Gods*. That the whole World was but as one great Idol, may appear from Poetical sayings (which Authority may pass in this case, Poets being the only *Divines* in the Heathenish ages who wrapt Religion and that Secular wisdom in verse) who Deified the World under that great name *Pan*. If it be said that Shepherds had this name given them by Poets, yet it is plain, that the mystery was terminated in higher beings (as *Plutarch* allows *Pan* to have influence on the Oracles as Superintendent , and some have applyed the story of
his

his death to Christ's suffering) which is enough to shew he was more than a Shepherd, or *sup n'm's*. For that age, as others before, consider'd the World and its Creator in one grosse notion which they expres't by *Pan*, as may be prov'd from the account which *Orpheus* gives of that Idoliz'd name in another place further to be consider'd: But seeing this way of argument from Practice, may not appear so convincing as that of Theory, because all do not tread the same steps with equal success, and the question is not, what knowledge of God hath been, but what may be learn't from the Creation.

To this demand a short answer

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may be return'd. When a man takes a serious prospect of the World, one of these thoughts will arise, either that it had a beginning of it self, or that it was the work of some Architect: if he is inclinable to allow the former, all that Reason can do in order to his conviction, is, to shew the impossibility of the World's being its own cause or maker. This prov'd, can only remove him from Atheism, or at least dispose him for a belief of the existence and knowledge of God. He therefore who arrives to this degree of knowledg in strictness and propriety of speech, deserves not the name *Theist*, any more than a man coming out of a Cell or Wilderness,

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seeing a Diamond or Jewel, hath only so much knowledg to pass sentence, that it is not of the same kind of stones which he treads on, deserves the name of a *Jeweller*, or seeing a stately Pallace, hath only skill to conclude, that the stones did not meet by mutual consent (as the fabulous story sayes of the building of *Thebes* for erecting that Fabrick, neither did grow so uniformly out of the Earth), may be said to know an *Architect* or a Builder.

If in defence of this argument it is said, that he who denyes that a Fabrick can raise it self, tacitly implies the necessity of the *being* of some *Builder*. This granted, will not relieve the Idiot, for the

Builder can be no otherwise said to be known by him, than under the general notion of a *Cause*. Now who will be so ridiculous as to say, that a man understands what an *Architect* is, and what kind and degree of knowledge gives him that name, who hath only a general notion of him, by which he calls him the *cause of a House*, which description is so rude, that it cannot be allow'd, except Logick can justifie it by terms of Art unknown to the Idiot, however it cannot acquit him from the imputation of grosse ignorance, which will appear greater when he considers the nice operations of nature, For if Creatures are look't upon which are most expos'd to common

mon view, nature sitting in them as on the stage, it is but little (and that conjectural) knowledge, he can pretend to ; let the Heavenly bodies be an instance to prove mans ignorance of their nature and influence ; who will pretend to know (except some Astrologer as ignorant as bold) for what design the Heavens so regularly muster their forces, till the event shews it, or to determine what dependance the World hath on some of the Stars, and positively conclude, that they are not Worlds ; though not of the same frame with this, of which Men are Inhabitants ? Now if man is ignorant of the dependance of one part of the Creation or another (as he must

be except nature were supplied
 with greater assistance than that of
Telescopes, or of any device which
 invention hath yet found) his
 knowledg must be said to be so
 imperfect, that it is not probable
 the argument drawn from the
 Worlds Harmony, should be pre-
 valent, when it meets with so much
 ignorance. To speak all ; the lit-
 tle and uncertain knowledg of
 natures works, rather disposeth
 man for admiration, than full sa-
 tisfaction of all doubts. But that
 I may not seem to detract from
 humanity, suppose the harmoni-
 ous subordination of causes was
 understood, this only implies,
 that there is a power which re-
 strains them from destroying or
fal-

falling foul one on the other, or makes them subservient to some end, of which the Reasoner is and must be ignorant.

If this assertion seem too rigid, which supposes man in the World as in Cimmerian darkness, let it be granted that the mere *Reasoner* hath a partial knowledg of God, if he will be content with the name of a partial *Theist*.

Let it be also consider'd, that it is possible, that the same contrivance may seem harmonious to one, and appear not to be so to another. The Inhabitants of the *Northern Climates* may admire and adore the Sun for its warm influence, whilst those between the *Tropicks* breath imprecations, be-
cause

cause it scorches by more direct rays. Let more be granted by saying that the Fabrick of the world is such (if understood) that it must be concluded to be a *Divine work*; yet seeing there is a possibility that matter and motion (as the *French* Philosophy teacheth) might work it self into that order which is to be admir'd in the world, the natural Reasoner will have little satisfaction to his doubts from the consideration of the worlds Harmony; especially seeing the *French* Hypothesis is consistent with it self, and solveth doubts on its own principles, which will abate the force of the usual arguments against *Chance* and the *Epicurean* Phi-

Philosophy. It also appears that some have been sensible of the weakness of an argument drawn from this *Topick of Harmony*, rather proving Gods existence from the gross consideration of *matter mov'd*, than as it is modeliz'd into forms. This way of arguing seems to press the conclusion with greater necessity than the other, but nearly lookt into can make a man no more a *Theist*, than the *Idiot* in the former instance. The examination of this argument might end by the citation of a Poetical saying, cited by St. Paul. *By him we live, we move and have our being*, (which motion (I presume) intended to be confirm'd

fin'd to the motion of the parts of mans body) is equally, if not more valid to prove the existence of God, than that argument which is drawn from a more distant *Topic*, viz. *The first impress on matter.*

But before I pass to another natural evidence of the *being of God*, I cannot but confess that the harmonious Fabrick of the world is us'd in holy Scripture, and by the antient Fathers, as a confirmation of their doctrine and faith, which might be examin'd and confirm'd by such contemplation ; yet I presume I shall not be injurious to *Scripture* or *Fathers*, if I say, that Method was us'd, because it is more universal and agreeable
to

to imagination and common reason, than other arguments which are more artificial ; not that it was thought to be more cogent. Besides, it is an easie conjecture, which supposes that such arguments were intended for believers, or at least those who were dispos'd to entertain their Doctrine, not for sceptical Reasoners. If it be further urged that the holy Fathers have made Converts and confuted Atheism by this method ; yet it is not sure to find success with all persons, especially such *Reasoners* as allow nothing to be certain which cannot recommend it self with an undoubted evidence, or impossibility of being otherwise. Suppose this pertinent question
was

was propos'd to the Atheistical Reasoner. If a man should find a Statue or an Altar with an inscription, whether he would conclude it was possible some liquid substance (like *Aqua fortis* corroding Iron) might casually effect that which art should do, and by the same reason press't to give his answer, determining whether the World wrought it self into its lovely frame. If the affirmative is answer'd, 'tis true that his conclusion is enough to denominate him a *Mad-man*, but he will not value or think himself injur'd by such compellations who sceptically disputes ; for he will be so bold as to say that as Religion and true Faith was once preserved by one

Athanasius

Athanasius, so may truth be found only in one single person.

To give the Reasoner a fair tryal of his knowledge, let the former instance be reveiw'd with a larger concession, *viz.* That the Idiot who acknowledgeth the building to have some cause (though the manner of expression is rude) yet implies the *being* of a builder, as the saying, the world was not its own cause, doth assert the *existence* of God. This being granted his ignorance will appear, for it is possible and commonly observ'd, that men may speak sentences and not understand what they imply, or what may be inferr'd from them. How many sayings which fall suddenly from some person,
whose

whose sense being measur'd by the bare interpretation of the words, is but trivial or ordinary, but by deduction will bear a higher meaning; whence it must be infer'd, that those conclusions which are gather'd as consequences of the words (which seem'd not to import so much) cannot be properly call'd his, who spake the words, but must be own'd by him who advanced them to a higher sense. Idiots sometimes are like Oracles and Prophets, whose high effusions are not understood by those who speak, such are the sentences of some Philosophers and Poetical Raptures, which according to the Authors words or sense favour'd of a low and mean degree of wisdom,

dom, till some Christians reading their Books Consecrated them by Comments and Conclusions, of which they could never have thought. Hence it is, that the Books of some ancient Philosopher are now like the fam'd Ship, which was so oft repair'd, till no old Plank remain'd. Many wise Conclusions appear in Heathenish writings, but are as mysterious *Characters* and *Cyphers*, which only the Religious by comparing them with Revelation can understand. These *Effata*, or sayings, are like signs which Deaf and dumb men make, who neither have advantage of nature to understand or speak, whose Interpreters are as *Mouths* and *understanding*

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too, whilst they stretch their Interpretations, beyond that which the *Significators* design'd, or could declare. Hence it appears, that the Reasoner in this particular quest (whilst he utters divine sentences not understood by himself, but to be Consecrated by the Commentator,) may not be put in the Catalogue of *Theists*, except it can be imagin'd, *implicit Reason*, may be allow'd as much as *implicit Faith*. Hitherto it being consider'd what degree of knowledge may be acquir'd by the Idiot (for in this Quest the Reasoner must be content to be so called) from the contemplation of the world, let a man of another apprehension (whose knowledg is more refin'd
by

by industry and art) who apprehends the *Cause*, grossly conceiv'd by the Idiot, as an *Architect*, be Catechiz'd in this Article of his *natural faith*, he will be found ignorant. For although the world is a great Glass, in which its *Maker* may be seen ; yet the Lineaments are so scatter'd and confus'd , that it is almost impossible to reduce them to a perfect form, as may appear from the consideration of the method us'd for the proof and knowledge of God, from a prospect of the world, which takes all the perfections which lie scatter'd in the Creatures, and then imagins them to be in one most perfect Being, (which implyes a denial of all imperfections) and all those

concentred in that Being, are *modo infinito*, as the Schools say. This argument bids fair for the discovery, but will fail, when strictly examin'd. For though it is granted that the perfections which are in the Creatures, are the same, though in an inferiour degree, with those attributed to the Creator, yet the ignorance of the manner how they are in this *Being*, which is infinite, and consequently incomprehensible, will make him so far fall short of his design'd knowledg (attempting vainly to measure Infinity by his finite Creatures) that he deserves no more to be called a *Theist*, than a man, who hath only seen the Suns image in a drop, & as it is in every part of the
Rainbow.

Rainbow, or the Stars in a Pool, can own the name of an Astronomer. This method is as insignificant, as addition of numbers to numbers; so that is impossible that they can have any *denomination*, or as an attempt to measure two quantities (one by the other) which in their own nature are *incommensurable*, or without any known proportion. By these instances I give greater advantage to the cavilling Adversary, than he could reasonably expect, for there is greater disproportion between God and his Creatures, than can be between *quantity* and *quantity*, However let it not be thought an unnecessary crowding in instances, if it be said, this method is so

far from being infallible, that it falls short of the certainty of operations in *Decimals*, which are not true, if examin'd by Rules of Demonstration, yet serve in practice, and the Error is not to be discern'd. But he who attempts to know God by this way of Reasoning, will fail in practice as much as *Theory*. The Heathens, who fram'd a notion of God by this method, and suited their Morals to it, were so notoriously erroneous, that some of their precepts and Conclusions are not reconcileable with Religious truth.

Another branch of the Reasoners argument, is the subordination of Causes, which in this Quest need not be distinguished
nicely

nicely from Harmony, one being the result of the other, both of which are so far from being Catholick arguments, which may convince all, that there are scarce any, who are able to pass judgment on that Harmonious subordination: for he who is a fit judg of the Harmony of the world, must be suppos'd to know all the parts of it and their use, or how they have dependance one on the other, as *Causes and Effects*. How imperfect this knowledg is, will appear from a view of natural Philosophy, in which most of the discoveries are but conjectures, though called Demonstrations. I do not design to start many old Errors, it will be sufficient to sug-

gest this consideration. That the ancient Sophies who took this method to conduct them, had an imperfect prospect of the World's Harmony, as may be concluded from the Astronomy (which is conversant about the most glorious and harmonious part of the World) extant in their ages, the best and most valuable part of which was compriz'd in the fam'd *Almagest*. Now how monstrous and defective a *Ptolomaic System* is, is plain from late observations. But omitting these, let it be consider'd, as suiting with that age in which (some discoveries (which destroy it) were not made; yet it will appear to be, if compar'd with the *Copernican*, as
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an ill contriv'd Engine which moves with many Wheels, *Cycles* and *Epicycles*, when one or few would make it more perfect. This perhaps may be the reason of that saying fastned on *Alphonsus*, who considering the world's Fabrick in *Ptolomie's Sphere*, rashly said, that he could contrive the world in a better frame, had he power to Create. Here I may expect a Check from the Reasoner, who may demand, whether I thought any late, or more Harmonious System might more effectually improve this argument? To this question I only say, that late inventions may improve the argument by rendring it more perswasive, not much more demonstrative.

tive. For Harmony is a certain proportion between numbers or magnitudes, which is not called so only for this reason, that some quantities have a *mutual alliance*, and agree in some third, which is common to both; but as it hath respect to the mind which apprehends them; as Musick is so called, because it kindly complies with the ear. 'Tis confes'd, that so much may be concluded from this Topick, that the humane Soul and the world owe their original (because of the approbation which Reason gives concerning the admirable contrivance of the worlds Fabrick) to the same *Being* or *Cause*; but as to the nature of that cause, a man can conclude nothing,
much

much more distinctly and certainly, than the Idiot in the former instance.

The next natural evidence of the existence of God, is from the general consent of all Nations, of which none so barbarous as not to own it, (as it was well observed by that great Oratour, who did not much improve it for his own information, as appears from his Books) yet this argument will find more Barbarism in the Sceptical Reasoner of this age, than the former was guilty of; For this knowledg of God as it is generally found, is not prov'd by the Reasoners method, which unravels and analyses all by reason before it is believ'd, but is rather a *common notion,*

*notion, or natural impress, which is on the lowest degree of mankind, that there is a Being, able to Reward or Punish; yet this is not the conclusion of the discursive facultie; for those who cannot prove a God, give assent to this Conclusion of his existence; which proof consider'd, though in the gross notion of an Idiot is more valid, than the Reasoners arguments modeliz'd into Syllogisms, and is more agreeable to the account, Revelation gives of God, which only expresses his existence, when he describes himself, by saying *I am*. Hence it follows, that the natural knowledg of God, so diffus'd over the whole VWorld, is like that of an Idiot, who*

who seeing a Circle can confess it to be so, although he cannot prove it by tryal, whether each ray or line drawn from the Center to the Circumference is equal.

This argument thus managed, will not find any success with the Reasoner, whose Rules oblige him to admit nothing as true (though the will is so inclinable to assent, that it can be sooner confounded than diverted) except it have pass'd the exact Inquisition of the understanding by discourse. Besides, he may suppose or doubt, whether that general consent was the result of natural knowledg, or the Doctrine of some wise men, whose open profession of that truth occasioned the vulgar (in
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process of several ages) to conclude it natural knowledg. These thoughts in the Reasoner can be look't upon no otherwise than a mere cavil, he being not able to shew, *how, when or where* this notion was fram'd (as it is well observ'd by a late Author) yet the suggestion will not shake the sceptical mind, for he who will be so bold to conclude the whole Worlds Representatives in a Council may err, will not boggle in saying, the general consent of all Nations might be terminated in an Error.

Thus far the World hath been consider'd, as to its Harmony of parts, from which 'twill be an easie digression to the Harmonious dis-

disposition of mans mind, which inclines him to a civil life. From this Topick no weak arguments are drawn for the proof of the *existence* of God, seeing mans regular, because civiliz'd, life is as great a wonder in Policy, as the subordination of causes in nature, which prevents mutinies amongst the Elements, and hinders mutual destruction. Now this bond of civil Society borrowes its strength from the supream Law-giver, who by his Divine Empire in mans mind, disposeth it, for mutual agreement with equals, and subjection to Superiours. This argument must have its allowance of validity, but it must be acknowledged, that this, as the former,

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wants its due force, except the existence of God is suppos'd, which the strict Reasoner will have prov'd, before he will own him, or any deductions which depend on it, For as it is confess'd, that the distinction of *Good* and *Evil* is the foundation of humane Society; so it must be allow'd, that actions are no otherwise called *Good* or *Evil*, but as they have relation to the natural Conscience, which supposeth the existence of God. Hence the defect of the argument appears, seeing he who proves God's *existence* by this method, necessarily supposeth a *being*, which endow'd his mind with such knowledg, which could point out *Good* and *Evil*. Seeing therefore

fore the truth of Conclusions drawn by this method, depends on a supposal of the existence of that *being* which should be prov'd, it cannot be imagined to have much force to convince the Sceptick, for the supposition makes him retire to his ἀναπαύσις, suspecting the whole argument as weak *Suppositions* and *Hypotheses*; being like flaccid Nerves, which want spirits to fortifie them, only serving to knit Paralytical members together, but without strength. If it is said that some Heathens, who had little or no knowledg of God, or at least own'd a false Deity, which is æquivalent to none, did many Heroical and good Acts, which implies the notion of *good*

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and *Evil*. This may be granted, yet their actions could no further be call'd *Good* or *Evil* than they had respect to a Deity, of which they had only a confus'd notion. For the conformity of an action with the Law of nature (which is a *Divine impress* on the mind) makes it to be good, being the *formal reason* of it, as the disconformity makes it vitious. Hence it follows, that those actions which were good, were not known to be so, but as they were measur'd by the *goodness* of God, which implies the former supposition.

The next part of this Disquisition shall be the examination of the force of that argument which is drawn from terrors of Conscience

ence upon Evil committed, which is of so great force (with a due allowance of Heavenly assistance, Grace and Revelation) that it storms the Atheist's strongest holds, and so beats him off his ground, that he knows not where to secure himself, but without, it is as little forcible as those drawn from other Topicks. For it being prov'd, that no action can be said to be *Good* or *Evil*, but as it hath relation to the *Divine Goodness* and *Will*, either as it is written in mans mind in the natural frame of his Soul, or by external conveyance by revelation; it is a præposterous proof from that Topick of fear, that God punisheth *Evil*, before it is granted (which

cannot be) that reason knows what is *Evil*, without the Consideration of a Deity, without which, fear is so far from being a *Medium* to help the Reasoner in his Conclusions, that it is more probable to hinder him in his natural Quest. That which leads men to certainty, according to the Reasoners method, must inform the understanding, and consequently determine the will after such a free manner as must exclude compulsion, but fear or any argument taken from it (which cannot be so fram'd, but that passion will interpose it self) is so far from doing either, that it cannot determine the will without some kind of violence done to it, so he that acts out of fear, cannot so proper-

properly be said to be a *free Agent*. Neither is it less prejudicial to the understanding, casting a mist before the eye of the mind by its turbulency; The Philosopher was sensible of this, who concluded its removal necessary from the mind in the search of Truth. *Si vis lumine claro cernere verum, gaudia pelle, pelle timorem. Boet. de Consol. Phil.* Fear is plac'd in the Soul as tempests in the *lowest Region*, through which it is as difficult for the mind to have a free and clear prospect, as for the Sun to discover its lustre through a Cloud. Let it not be argued from Holy Scripture, that fear was a necessary introduction to the knowledg of God, as appears

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from the apprehension the People had of wonders on *Mount-Sinai*, and the *Mosaical appeal* to them, if ever they saw such astonishing wonders. This tends not so directly to justify the former argument: for it may be reasonably presum'd, that this method was us'd rather to confirm them in the belief of a Deity before entertain'd, and to prevent Apostacy, than to be their first Tutor, to instruct them in the first Article of the *Jewish*, as well as *Christian Creed*. The most direct way to wisdom, as it respects speculation, is not by fear excited in the mind, although it hath great influence on practice, as the sense of that holy saying imports, which calls *the fear of*
God

God the beginning of wisdom, for in that sentence, the *existence* of God is suppos'd, before fear takes its place in order to instruction. However it was a necessary defensive against Idolatry, to which the Jews were too inclinable. In such particular cases, such turbulent passions may usher in Devotion ; but generally consider'd, rather confound than inform the mind. For it seems not design'd for the Christian, but that part of the world which may be call'd the Devil's Province, in which he is ador'd by numerous votaries, led to that adoration by fear, which gives occasion of considering, how that turbulent passion rather disposeth man for Diabolical worship,

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ship, than that of the true God. For seeing the Devils can inflict punishments, or rather vex men with Tortures which excite fear, they may possibly terminate mans Devotion in them as Deities. If it is said that this assertion implies impossibilities, whilst a power is allow'd to the Devil of terrifying the Conscience with punishment, which the Reasoner may conclude Eternal, as well as Temporal. A short reply will shew, that this objection cannot be the sense of a man in his pure naturals, except he was assur'd of the immortality of his Soul, of which some Heathens spake doubtfully, though they confidently presum'd its eternal duration, because they could
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not imagine, how it should perish by any known causes. Therefore their *all-natural Divinity* did not conclude eternal Rewards, or Punishments, suitable to the Souls duration. 'Tis true Hell is sometimes so shadow'd by the Poets, as if their Poems had borrow'd from Revelation, but their Poetical conclusions in this case can be no further credited, than they speak of the Souls immortality, of which there is as little satisfactorily said, as in *Prose*; besides they being the result of fancy, cannot effectually commend themselves as matters of *natural faith*: For if the Authors of such Poetical sentences, could they be imagin'd to rise again, and take a view of
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the Conclusions of *Mythologists*, and those who write Comments on their Poems. I might reasonably doubt, whether several opinions fastned on them by deduction would be own'd as their genuine sense. I need not add this, that some have openly declar'd in *verse* as much as others in *Prose*, that they were fabulous fictions, not much to be regarded by minds, not too much byass'd by passion, or superstitious fear. For not only the profane and Atheistical Poet concluded the future state as dubious, saying, *Quid Styga, Quid Barathrum, Quid nomina vana timetis?* but others, whose invention and fancy were more soberly bounded, and free from the extravagancy of
more

more *dangerous Raptures*. Before I take one step further in this Disquisition, 'tis necessary, that an objection be remov'd, which may render what is said less credible, *viz.* That the Devil hath no power of himself, neither can act any thing by his own absolute Authority, but by Deputation, and it cannot be imagin'd, that he should punish sin with eternal punishment, seeing he is a finite Creature, and his business is to promote it. To the first part of this objection, the same answer must be return'd, which was given to the former. That it is such as the mere *Reasoner* cannot start, for Revelation only informs man of the nature of Devils, and the limitation of their power

power, wherefore seeing reason could not suggest, that it is sufficiently answer'd by shewing it is impertinent ; the other part of it, which threatens the former assertion, cannot destroy it ; for although the Devil cannot be thought inclinable to punish *sin* properly so call'd, yet practice shews, that he Tortures some as finners against his Laws, by which he supports his Dominion in the World, which offenders deserve the name of actors of good, as by avoiding vice (according to the plain definition of vertue, *virtus est vitium fugere*) men become vertuous. The *Indian* concludes he hath offended the supream power, though but Diabolical, when

when mischief, or any extraordinary appearance, threatens his ruine. Hence appears the possibility of terminating Devotion in a *finite being*, for it being represented as dreadful, as any deduction from mere reason can make it, 'tis no great wonder if a man look on that power, as infinite (which is not so) seeing it bounds his thoughts, if not transcends all he can imagine, and consequently adore that power, as a God or the *supream Being*, which is only deputed, and limited. This may be further prov'd from *Sacred story*, which sayes, the ignorant multitude declar'd the Apostles Gods in *humane shape*, and were hardly restrain'd from an Idolatrous

trous Worship. This instance is a sufficient evidence of the truth of the former assertion, although it seems to fail, because of the difference between *good Apostles* and *bad Angels* ; yet both agree in this, that they are Creatures, which shews it is possible, that *finite beings* may be mistaken for God. For this instance justifying the possibility of adoration given to *finite beings*, and the inclination of men who are too ready to worship them, when they shew themselves able to do good in the highest degree (such as was wrought by the Apostles Miracles). It may be concluded by the same reason, that when *any Being* manifests it self with such power, which is able to

to inflict the greatest punishment, the *Reasoner* may own it as God.

Before more is said to prove the former position, 'tis necessary, that some objections be remov'd, one of which may arise out of the instance, which said the ignorant multitude in that case were not to be esteemed as rational men, being without the due use of their reason, which could inform them of the impossibility of finite Creatures being Metamorphiz'd to a Deity, or the perfections of it to be communicated to a Creature. To this a double answer must be given suitable to the parts of the objection, to the first of which it may be said, if the ignorant votaries were
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so much astonish'd with the Miracles that *surpriz'd reason* knew not how to act; and those which have been conducted by this argument drawn from fear, which confounds the understanding, appear with such confus'd zeal, which favours more of distraction than sobriety of mind, (as it is evident from the Indians practice,) it may be concluded that the Topick from which they argued, *viz.* The *Emergencies* of some *extraordinary power* put them in that confusion. To the second, 'tis enough to say, that it is not necessary, that it should be determined in this case, whether the Dæmons terrifying that part of the World with malicious prodigies,

gies, are *finite*, or *infinite* with a real respect to their natures, but the understanding, which makes *esse & apparere*, signifie the same in matters of *natural faith*. This may be further confirm'd from Heathens practice, who ador'd Oracles, which were *Devils Resident* in some parts of the World, but worshipp'd as the *supreme powers*. But perhaps it may be said, that the Heathen esteem'd the Oracles only as *Secretaries or mouths* of the Deity as the Etymology of *ἱερός* and Sibylla implies; yet practice did not make this distinction, for Monarchs, who consulted them, thought they had taken Advice or Counsel from the *supreme power* (which was only

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distinguished by the names of several places where their sentences were utter'd) which *Supremacy* was boldly written on their Altars, till by Christ's coming the glory was buried, and the *proud inscription* chang'd to an *Epitaph*, the Oracle being *spiritually dead*, in that forc't return to Hell, which occasion'd this sad complaint to a Votary, who came to consult of future events.

*Me puer Hebraeus divos Deus ipse gubernans
Cedere sede jubet tristemq, redire sub Orcum.*

The Oracles were necessitated to make such confessions, it being one part of their penance to proclaim their own weakness, and necessary subjection to that *supream Being*, of whom they so
pro-

prophetically spake, as if they had been the *Oracles* of God, as appears by the answer given by *Apollo's* Oracle, to one demanding what God was

* Αυτοφύης ἀνιδρακτος ἀμήτωρ ἀσυρέλικτος,

* Ουνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ χωρέμενον, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων

Τὸτὶ θεὸς μίκρα δὲ θεῶ μερὶς ἀγγελοι ἡμεῖς.

Who could imagine that the Devil was the Authour of this almost sacred verse, were it not consider'd that God layes a necessity on the evil Angels, that they shall proclaim his power, for the Devils in the *Caves* and *Groves*, as well as those amongst the *Tombs* did speak truth concerning Christ, though it added to their Torment? This is enough to demonstrate, that those true

sayings when spoken by them were extorted, and they (as much as spiritual beings are capable of) put on the *rack* by such confessions. This *Oracular cunning* (which would not confess Christ but when forc't) occasions a remark on the Devils subtilty, who being necessitated to acknowledg him, insinuates this to his Votaries that Oracles are God's *Nuncio's*, and ally'd to a *Deity* as *Ambassadors*, whilst the *lye* is *minc't* by *μερὶς ἄγγελος ἡμεῖς*. If the Reasoner take advantage from this citation of refuting the former position, by saying that they seem'd not to aim at adoration as *infinite beings*; neither were they esteem'd by wise men as any other than *Angels*, as
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appears from Heathen compellations, which speak them *Ministers*; beside the Oracles more plain confession, who would have prayer directed to him in this language

Πάντοτε, παντοῦ δακτύλῳ ἐντολῆς, ὅτε καὶ αὐτὸς δαίμων.

Yet it must be observ'd, though the Devil calls himself *Dæmon* or *Angel*, yet he calls himself *omniscient* and owns *universal wisdom*, which cannot be allow'd any Creature, and seeing he enjoyns a *form of Prayer* to be directed to him; he tacitly insinuates to his Votaries that he is God, for he to whom Prayers are made must be God according to Heathens Religion, which owns no invocations of Creatures as *Mediators*.

But let it be granted that the

Oracles were *Angels*, and only *Jupiter*, *Apollo*, with some other were ador'd as Deities, this concession will be so far from destroying the former position, that it rather confirms it, by allowing adoration to *finite beings*, such as *Jupiter* and *Apollo*, and many other who must be in the Catalogue of men, who made use of Dreams and Oracles to promote their *Apotheosis* as *Lactant. cap. 8. De origine erroris*, argues, *Eos ipsos quos docuimus Deos non esse, Majestatem suam ostendisse prodigijs, insomnijs, augurijs & Oraculis, &c.* More might be cited out of that Chapter as pertinent, the design of which (as well as of this Tract) being to shew the use of Reason in
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Religion, and how much the natural man is guilty of folly, who intirely resigns himself to its conduct ; but I am sensible that I must appear tedious in this first Disquisition, and inexcusable too, did not the Subject treated off exact the most strict examination, and starting all that can be said against the former position. Wherefore let the Reasoner object in another way of Heathens practice, in shewing that they did not always terminate their Devotions in that *Being* in which they found a *specimen* of *Divine* power or knowledg, which may be prov'd from the *Sibylls*, who appear'd no less Divine than the *Oracles* ; yet were so far from being ador'd,

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that they scarce found civil Entertainment from the greatest *Personages* in the World; to this objection I will only suggest these considerations as an answer. That the disregard and little estimation they had in the World proceeded from the different manner and matter of predictions of the Sibylls and Oracles, the former were to come to pass after many Revolutions of Years and Ages, the latter as *ex tempore* *Prophets* spake to every particular question, and their mouths open to each Votary. Now seeing the Sibylls prophecies were to be fulfilled not untill some ages were past, it may be easily imagin'd that active minds would be more prone to adore the Oracles
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who were as *Tutelar Angels* to advise in every particular case, than those who spake more generally of what should come to pass at further distance. Another reason may be given why the Sibylls were not ador'd; because their Birth and Linage was but humane, it was not probable they should purchase Adoration, for the *known humanity* was an obstacle which hinder'd worship due to *him*, to whom all Oracles and Angels submit with fear of that *power* which was able to silence them. If it is said, that this answer cannot remove the objection, for the same reason will destroy Heathenish Devotion to *Jupiter*, and other reputed Deities, who were only
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men Deifi'd by opinion of some fond Votaries ; It must be answer'd, that they were esteem'd as eternal, though really they were mortalls ; which opinion was enough to denominate them Gods ; for in Heathens devotion *to be*, and *to be believ'd* to be so, was the same. As *Alexander* thought it was enough to his purpose, that the Barbarians were perswaded he was a *God*, though he knew himself to be but mortal, as he glories in the delusion ; whilst he says,

Βάρβαροι με κατεπλάγησαν καὶ ἰδεῖς ἀνθρώπων
ζιόμενοι θεῶν μάχεσθαι.

The diots conquerd themselves by their false zeal and perswasions : so it answers diabolical designs, if Devils are mistaken for Gods. Besides the Sibylls
were

were so much like *Apostl's*, that they did not pretend to Worship, due to them, but another, of whom they Prophefied; neither did they, as the *Devilish Oracles*, require any form of Worship or Prayer to be directed to them; it was as much as they aim'd at, if they were thought (according to the Etymology of their name *οἱ θεοὶ*) to be of the Heavenly Counsel. If that age had been so zealously inclin'd to adore their wisdom, and could be imagin'd to have consider'd their Prophefies as fulfilled; yet the matter of what was foretold, would convince the World that they were not *Gods*, nor claim'd Adoration. These circumstances consider'd will give satisfaction to
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the question, how it happend that Sibylls were not Ador'd as Oracles? and shew that it is enough to confirm the former position, *viz.* That Devotion may be terminate in some finite Being, as supreme, though not in all appearances of extraordinary power. These obstacles being remov'd, the next argument for the proof of the being of a Deity shall be examin'd, which is taken from that prevailing Topick of paternal love and care which is presum'd to be such as would not deceive his Son, by a successive Tradition of the being of God (which is so universal, that Barbarians are not without it) which if false, would be such an unnatural deceit, that Stage nor History

History can parallel. This argument hath more strength from this consideration, that as the Fathers would not be so unnatural to deceive their Sons, so would they not suffer themselves to be deceived in matters of great moment. This is so probable, that it scarce admits of any suspicion of its possibility of being otherwise; yet when it is examined by a Rigid and subtil inquiry, it will be doubted whether the Forefathers might not commit that out of weakness, which they would not have done out of choice, could their understanding have been better inform'd.

How much reason fails in its general quest, appears from the
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consideration of these arguments. I pass now to a more particular Disquisition, *how the unity of the Godhead is or can be known by principles of pure or uninlightned Reason.*

Although the supposal of Polytheism, according to the manner how man frames a notion of God (which is by summing up all perfections, and then concentrating them in one Being after an infinite manner) implies a contradiction, and the plurality of God supposes the possibility of more *than all*, which is so palpable a contradiction, that the very naming of it is a sufficient confutation; yet in strictness of speech, seeing the Reasoner cannot attain to a clear
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and distinct knowledg of an infinite Being, how can he be said to know God as one God, and it may take place amongst the Theists, he must be seated in the Classis of the Athenian Votaries, and be esteemed no wiser than the inscription which St. *Paul* cites, makes them who worship an unknown God; in which the Epithet supposes they were ignorant of what they said, for if they had known him they could have distinguished him from other Beings in the universe, for it is so essential to Unity to be distinguished from other Beings, that if it be apprehended as it lies confused, it cannot properly be said to be known, no more than the nature of Gold can be said to be known

known when it meets with such an Idiots Judgment, which is so far from being a Touchstone, that it can only distinguish the Ore from common Sand. Besides it is more than probable, that the Heathen had (neither can the Reasoner have more on such principles) only a confused notion of power and wisdom in the World, not able to comprehend one being distinct from the rest, so as to be pointed out by any certain and distinguishing Character, and an assurance of all power and wisdom summed up in *one being*.

I might conclude this Disquisition without any further survey of Heathens opinions, did I not consider that authority, though in this
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case may appear insignificant to my purpose; yet may be urged against my position, if it be suggested, that the Heathens, *Plato*, with many others acknowledged but one God, and therefore by Christian writers both antient and modern cited to confute Polytheism, which citations, I presume, were rather made use of, to dispose the minds of men for a belief of one God, than as convincing Demonstration, for it is plain that the Heathens in their most refined notions of a Deity have not framed such an exact Idea of one God, as to quit the thoughts of Polytheism; for when they spake most Divinely, they oftentimes, as if they had forgot what they were

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speaking of, or at least sensible, that they could not comprehend it, instead of *God*, say *Gods*. I cannot but take notice of *Socrates*, so famous for natural Divinity, for opposing Heathenish Deities, when he speaks of the excellent goodness of the Deity, and how that men were so much the more good as their actions had Conformity to the Divine; which sentence *Erasmus* sayes deserved to be called Gospel, had there not been a mistake in the number, saying *Gods* for *God*.

I might here detain the Reader by citation of opinions of Heathens (which is not pleasant to me but when necessary) who may as well spend time in considering
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such extravagant *brain Idols*, as viewing those in Pagans Temples, but I shall only refer him to *Tully*, *Seneca*, or other famous Heathen Sophists, and he will find, that although they speak of the providence, justice, and goodness of the Divine Being, as if they were Secretaries of Heaven; yet these by them are not attributed only to one God but Gods, and *Dij* in these high accounts of Divinity is as often used as *Deus*.

To instance but in one cited by *Tully*, *lib. 2. de legib. Thales*, who speaks so Divinely, that he owns Providence, ubiquity and eminent power, with Wisdom, which knows our thoughts, to be in some Divine Being; yet at last fastens all these

perfections in *Dij*, how much this favours of Polytheism or confusion of thoughts, the Reader will confess when he traces *Tully* himself (who cites others). All that can be said to exempt them from Polytheism is, that when they said *Dij*, they intended inferiour Deities; This cannot rescue them from the former imputation, because it is a contradiction to imagine Providence, Omniscience, and other Attributes can be communicated to any Being which is not infinite. To conclude this part of the Paragraph, all the seeming Divine sentences of Heathens speak promiscuously of *God* or *Gods*, and make the Court of Heaven speak in the Language of a mortal

mortal Monarch (Wee) which though a plural expression without the help of a figure is known to represent a *King*; they were so unluckily ignorant, that although they had some notion of the Deity, they could not express what they had in confusion conceived, as it too plainly appears from their wild discourses of God, which if they had been on any other Subject, they would have never intitled the Authors to the names of wise men.

Let it not be objected, that the same may be argued against the Scripturist, which is against the *Reasoner*; because in holy Writings God is as well represented by an *Elohim* a plural number, as *Jebo-*
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vab which is singular. To this objection it is enough to suggest, that there is not the same reason in Pagan writings to justify such expressions, which seem to favour Polytheism, as in Holy Scripture. *Moses* (when he expresses one God by a plural number) his language is suitable to the Hebrew Idiom or way of expression, without the nice and mysterious Criticism to prove a Trinity; as it appears from Heathen Interpreters, as well as those of the Jews, it hath been translated as singular. So *Longinus*, Page 35. Sect. 7. *περὶ ὑψίστου θεοῦ ὁ θεὸς ὁπότε τίς γενέσθαι φησὶ, καὶ ἐγένετο* citing *Moses's* words. Add to this another consideration, that he who wrote the History of Creation, wrote

wrote also the Law, in which man is confined to the worship of one God in the plainest terms, from which command there may be a reasonable conjecture, that man in his corrupt state is more prone to own plurality of Gods than profess *one*, else why was this command in the front and so early given? I know it is, and may be said, that the Preface as well as the Command was as an Antidote against the poyson of the Egyptians Idolatrous customs; yet Idolatry being then so young (only a few *Garden Deities, Leeks and Onions* ador'd) it may be imagin'd that this Law was promulged to remove mens ignorance, which without Divine assistance is invin-

cible, for the eye of the Soul in its decay'd state is like one intoxicated, whose weakness multiplies a single object, wherefore it was necessary that *Israel*, even to improvement of Knowledg as well as Religion, should know there was but one God. Let this also be consider'd, that in Pagan Divinity we find no such distinguishing worship or character given to *Jupiter*, to shew that he was God. Are the other Deities but Deputies? (as some learned men say) or so reputed, for they were all ador'd: now in Scripture, there is not the least favour or dispensation granted to adore any Being but God, no not so much as his Representators, Prophets and Apostles working wonders; This
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is enough to justify the expression of God by a plural number in Scripture, though not in Pagan writings ; (besides the Grammatical help of a singular number with a plural without false Syntax or false sense) The Heathens did apprehend God in such a manner, as a plural number best suited with their thoughts, seeing the Universe was their God as appeared by their Deifi'd *Pan*, of whom there is this account

Πᾶντα καλῶ κρατερὸν γεθεὶν κοσμοῖο τὸ σύμπαν
 Ὀυρανὸν ἢ δὲ θάλασσαν —

Orpheus in Hymn. This may be further proved by a Testimony of *Lactantius. lib. 9. De falsa Religione* who when he brings in *Trismegist* speaking most Divinely concerning

cerning the Unity of the God-head, saying ὁ θεὸς εἷς ὁ δὲ εἷς ὀνόματος ὁ προσδέεται, which he translates or paraphrases on it, *Igitur Deo nomen non est, nec opus est proprio vocabulo nisi cum discrimen exigit multitudo.*

Whence it is plain, that the multitude sometimes apprehended God as the general power reigning in the World, though at other times they were more accurate in asking his name.

But not to check inventions or methods, by which men frame the notion of one God, let the Metaphysician think of infinite power, wisdom, justice, &c. And according to art or rule, put them together, he will make such an Aggregate

gregate or Sum of perfections which man cannot naturally know, or by what one name to call it, beside that of infinite, now how properly Infinity in the natural mans sense can be said to be *one*, hath been said before, it being like Eternity, of which we can speak so little properly, that we can rather say what it is not, than what it is. Add to this, that the Reasoner who frames a notion of a God by summing up perfections, and knowing not how one Attribute poises another, how power, wisdom, justice and mercy bound one another, he seems as much a Polytheist as he who own'd power in *Jupiter*, and wisdom in *Apollo*, &c. And can no more be said to be a Theist, than

than one whose education hath advanced him no further than the Alphabet, can be said to be a Philologer, or he who only knows Letters, an Interpreter of words, before they have taken their places to form them. This instance, if it seem not so apposite, yet I hope pardonable, seeing Christ himself disdains not to be called the Word, which without his own exposition would but imperfectly express his nature, and *Amelius* a Platonist admir'd by *Eusebius. lib. 11. de prepar. Evang. cap. 19.*

And call'd *ζηλωτής τῆς φιλοσοφίας*.
 Because he so much approved the compellation. Suppose a Novice who hath been only in the Porch of a Geometrical School, and learnt
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all kind of Lines in their several varieties, of which the most accurat draught must consist, shall he be thought worthy of the name of a Painter who knows no proportions of the single lines? this instance I presume is so apposite, that it will need no comment on it, and it giving me occasion of a digression from the Metaphysical method of framing a notion of one God to one more suited to all apprehension by similitude, as *Vives*, *Grotius*, *Morney*, and others, who have illustrated the Unity of the Godhead by Analogy, *viz.* The Heavens, one Sun, one *Primum mobile*, and other instances of Monarchy, as it appears in the World. How little impression such instances

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ces are like to make on some, who in their Philosophical certainty conclude that there is no such *primum mobile* in the same Authors sense, neither dare affirm there are no more lights of like nature, and influences, may be guest at by the reception and entertainment which later Hypotheses have found.

So he who endeavours to demonstrate the Unity and Trinity in the Godhead by the three powers which are in one Soul, may expect his argument should be as little prevalent; for that method which obligeth a Peripatetic to the belief of a Trinity, may perswade the Platonick to believe a Quaternion; for he as zealously contends for that, as accom-

commodated to its several degrees
 of knowledg, as the other was for
 his *τριφυχία*, or three powers in the
 rational Soul : and surely the *Pla-*
tonicks did admire the number 4.
 else it had not been so solemnly
 used in their Oaths. Let it be urged
 that God may be known by simili-
 tude, & although there be but im-
 perfect and small footsteps of his
Being to be traced by the *Reasoner*;
 yet according to proportion, by
 one Attribute there may be discor-
 very of all, as the proverbiall
 speech of an *Herculean* draught
 from a foot (and if I may stretch
 the letter of the Proverb) a little
 finger. If such objections ap-
 pear to the Readers thoughts, I
 only desire him to re-collect, or
 look

look back to the former part of the Disquisitions, in which it was never granted, that man by reasoning can have any such knowledge of any Attribute, so as it shall be a Rule to him infallibly to judge of the nature of God without Revelation, and the last appeals made to it. I am not ignorant that the Primitive Fathers, (to instance in one, *Minutius Fælix*) made use of similitude to convince the World of the Unity of the Godhead, *Dux unus Apibus, Dux unus in Gregibus*; yet this was intended rather for illustration than strict proof; neither is there violence done to the Divine example, whilst the Reasoner disowns similitudes in case that demonstration is justly

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expected, for although God is pleased to discover himself by similitudes, he expects not that his Being should be proved by that method.

The Reconciler who supposes the Being of God and Providence. *Page 4.* of his Preface, cautions us to beware of similitudes whilst we would have a true conception of him. *page 12.* *Attributes which we cannot possibly know, except he tell us, and then says, we should not conclude or guess about them by Analogies, to things of a nature infinitely distant from his, or by maxims fram'd according to the nature of inferiour Being.* Let not this argument which seems to have its foundation in practice

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prejudice the Reasoner, for I shall no further make use of it than reason must allow, and the authority cited shall have another ratification of its strength, by an appeal to the Reasoner who helps his thoughts by art, and impartial and unbiass'd industry; who by the conduct of his own reason will scarce find out that narrow path which will lead him to the infallible knowledg of one God, for after the utmost perusal of his own arguments concerning him, he will be oblig'd to describe himself by a name suitable to his thoughts, which if he do, he will be in suspense whether he ought to be called Theist or Polytheist, this bold presumption is founded on the
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former position. *Viz.* That the Reasoner hath only a general knowledg of power undistinguished in the World. That a gross and imperfect knowledg in a loose and common way of speech is enough to justifie the Language which calls a Being, one which in strictness is not so. As a late Author instances in *Rome*, which retains its name; although the City is not the same, which first took that name, and there are *Protean* bodies which each moment change; yet retain the same name. Such comparisons, or such expressions may serve to express things finite, words being as Coin, or rather the Stamp upon it (which oftentimes is so far from represent-

ing the person of a King, that there is much necessity of a Motto, to tell whose Image it is; as Painters in the infancy of their Art were forced to supply the defect of their Pencil by their Pens, and make men Readers, not Spectators of Pictures.) But the strict Reasoner as he is careful in framing notions of things, so he will be careful in giving names, or saying any thing concerning number or nature of that Being which he cannot comprehend; *Infinite*, as *infinite* is beyond the reach of our understanding, whence it is apparent, that when any thing is affirm'd of an object as infinite, so far the affirmation will be doubted of as uncertain, that assent which
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passes apprehension, must pass for ignorance, and can only be adjusted by an implicit faith. Infinite would not be infinite, could it be apprehended as an adæquate object of humane knowledg; though it were as nigh as possible. The French Philosopher modestly took the liberty to make a term of Art, and gives the old World a name more suitable to mans apprehension, than that which it had been known by in several ages; for finite, calling it *indefinite*, which is something in its own nature which hath bounds, therefore its dimensions possible to be known; but no man can determine any thing concerning infinity either as to number or quality, seeing the

object he judges of is beyond his reach. He who attributes any *property* to a *Subject*, is supposed to understand the nature or *form* of it: otherwise, he like the man in the gospel, who having not fully his sight recovered, may call men *Trees*, or fasten impossibilities on the *Subject*, least qualify it by the notion he frames of it, with a power to make impossibilities not to be so; as the *Reconciler of Reason and Religion* instances in the *French Virtuoso*, who concludes the possibility of a *Hill* without a *Valley*, not considering that ἀδύνατα τῇ αὐτῶν φύσει καὶ παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς τὴν αὐτὴν φυλάττει φύσιν, ἀδύνατον γὰρ καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ἢ τὸ τὴν διάμετρον ποιῆσαι τῇ πλευρᾷ σύμμετρον. *Alex. Aphrodis. de fato*, p. 135. To make such assertions appear

pear plausible, all that can be said,
 is, that *impossibilities* cease to be
 such, when they have relation to
 God, as the *vast bulk* of the Earth
 appears as a *point* or as nothing,
 when considered in respect to the
 motion of some Stars. This as-
 sertion shews the Authors ingenui-
 ty and modesty, but gives little
 satisfaction to the Reasoner: for to
 conclude God can do impossibili-
 ties, because he is infinite, is to
 prove a proposition by a *medium*
 equally obscure. It is a difficult
 task to find truth in general, and
 he who is nice, will be cautious
 how he attributes any *propertie* to
 a *Being*, which he doth not under-
 stand, but more especially when he
 is to speak of *one*, whose *attributes*

are so nearly united to his being, that they cannot be distinguished from it. This difficulty of framing the notion of God, made some Heathens look on the Deity as an *universal power*, or an *aggregat of all perfections* in the World: for though they seem to speak Divinely of *God as one*, I am apt to think they speak in the Language of Jewellers who call one kind of *Margarites unions* (because first they were found *single*) when daily experience shews *many* are hatcht in the same *shell*. Here I might make a stop and pity the *Ethnic* and the *secular Reasoner*, who like *Apodes* (Birds on the wing) hover in contemplation without feet to rest on (for whose
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support, though nature hath made provision; yet with greater difficulty and danger than for other familiar works of nature) for though it must be confest as a *father* eminent both for Christian and *Pagan Oratory*, says in his *Ostavia* that the Heathens did always own one God and providence but knew not how to point it out. This confest, helps the Heathen or Reasoner very little; for as it was said in the beginning of this Disquisition, that he who hath such a Roving phancy as not to distinguish *God* from other *beings* deserv'd not the name of a *Theist*. If it be again objected that the *unity* of the *God-head* hath been known to those who had no

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opportunity or abilities to read
 holy Scripture, yet spake sentences
 which are matter of Christian faith
To instance in one famous verse.

Ἐἵς μόνος εἶμι θεὸς καὶ ὃν ἔστ θεοὶ ἄλλοι.

This cannot help the Reasoner
 in this *Article of belief*, for it be-
 ing the saying of a *Sibyl* it cannot
 be called the *dictate* of pure reason,
 for though we know not how, yet
 it must be acknowledged, that so
 much as they spake truly of God
 and Christ came from Revelation
 in such a Way as none can deter-
 mine. Thus far I have endeavou-
 red to shew Reasons defect in its
 first and chiefest discoveries, when
 it puts it self on the *rack*, stretch-
 ing

ing only to a Sceptical uncertainty. It now remains, that I meet with another objection, which may seem so considerable, that I may not pass it by without taking notice, that it may be retorted from the former part of the Disquisition, that I conclude the Gentiles or Ethnicks had not the true knowledge of a Deity (neither could properly be called Theists), which assertion seems too cruel and unreasonable: for some eminent in learning allow, that the Heathens in their Theory and practice, (if not sav'd in some sense, may be exempt from Damnation, because they had a *Law* from God, and by that Law were to be judged. Add to this, that the Heathens are allow'd

low'd to be Judges of actions morally *good* and *evil*, *just* and *unjust*, and justice in man is the same with that which is in God, though in an inferiour degree. Let this be granted ; It will not help the Reasoner in setting out his guide, for although the rules of Justice are the same in the *Ethnick* and the *Christian* (and some of the *Commandments* being *Reasons* dictates, promulg'd and made Law by another Legislation) yet they shall not be judged in the *same way and manner*, suppose the Heathen exactly observe his *Legem Talionis*, and demands an *Eye* for an *Eye*, or a *Tooth* for a *Tooth*, as the holy Scripture expresses it, or to speak in the poetical saying which *Aristotle*

stotle lays down as a rule approv'd
 by Rhadamanthus *ἔειπε παῖδες τὰ ἔργα ζῆ-
 δειν καὶ ἰδέσθαι γένοιντο.* *Arist. lib. 5.* Such
 observation of natures Law will
 justify the Heathen, not the Christi-
 an. The Reasoner may also urge
 that *Tully, Plato, Seneca*, and other
 Sophies have been Authors of such
 sentences which have such a near
 alliance to Scripture, that only the
 Authors names can distinguish
 them from it. This granted, will
 not help the Reasoner, for he can-
 not prove them *emanations* of a
 Heathens mind, or convince the
 World of the certainty of their
 not being borrowed from Divine
 Revelation, mixing their own
 thoughts with some notions taken
 from Scripture, as some have en-
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deavoured to prove, which will appear more probable, if the Ethnick be considered in his confused way of speaking of God, and different expressions of him, which will give way for a conclusion, That they certainly knew a *Being* above themselves, but what it was were uncertain, for had they as certainly known his nature as they seemed assured of his *Being*, there had not been such variety of opinions concerning him, for these *notions* in mans mind are *unalterable*, and although discourse or *artificial* ways may confound them, when conclusions are to be drawn, and so seem variable; yet in themselves considered cannot be changed. Wherefore it being

ing granted, that God is known by pure Reason as to his Being, and some of his attributes; yet by this imperfect notion the Reasoner can be no more called a Theist, and said to know God, than he who seeing some few, or all the proportions of a man drawn or painted, can be said to know his *Crafsis* or Constitution, or what humour is predominant. If a similitude may be admitted in this case, it may be said that he who passes judgment of the nature of the Deity by those lineaments of *justice* and *mercy*, *power* and *knowledg*, which are in man, he will be as ignorant of the nature of God as the other of the *Crafsis* or Constitution of a man, for as the one cannot conclude

clude by the draught what humour is predominant ; neither can the other know in which attribute God takes most delight. Besides, if mere natural evidence is to be set up judg of *just* and *unjust*, without respect to the *Divine will*, a great part of Religion will be disputed, and the *Christian Creed* contracted into too narrow a compass, some of its *Articles* (according to the method of passing judgment) being in danger not to be believ'd ; and Christianity would not be improv'd much above that height which King *Agrippa* arriv'd at, men being but *almost perswaded to be Christians*.

Hitherto Reason hath been consider'd in its quest, concerning the
Unity

Unity of the God-head, but before this disquisition is concluded, I cannot but take notice of that fam'd instance in *Plato* (cited by *Eusebius, de præparat. Evang. lib. undec. c. Dec. tert.* who made the unity of the Godhead as a *Characteristick* or *token*, by which *Dionysius* should discern, whether his Letters or Epistles were *jocular* or *serious*. This seems to speak the Author naturally Orthodox, but doth not sufficiently justify him, and undoubtedly free him from the imputation of Polytheism, or a confus'd notion of the Deity, for it may be doubted whether he us'd that *Beginning with one God* as a *mark* of his more *serious business*, rather than to signify his *settled opinion* ;

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nion ; because it would favour too much of a narrow and envious Spirit, not becoming a Philosopher , to have communicated that as a secret to *Dionysius*, and not so clearly and ingenuously declared it to the rest of the World in the whole *series* of his Discourses. It may be also a wonder that he could at any time write *Jocularly*, and playing with the Deities, making the term *Gods* to be as a Signet to seal his more trivial secrecy, or less accurate writings , except it can be thought, that he, as a *Socrates*, derided and laught at the Heathens Idolatry, being serious when *Deus* came into his mind, but laughing when he thought of *Dij*. This may be one plausible way

way to confirm the usual application of *Plato's* Epistolar *Mark* or *Sign*, but it is hard to be imagin'd, if his stile and manner of writing is considerd.

That which is said of Heathens ignorance, will not be easily refuted by citations taken from *Porphyrius*, *Proclus* or *Plotinus*, or other Platonists, seeing it may be presum'd, that they entertain'd the same opinion of the Deity which their Master had. Now how far the *Platonick* Doctrine is to be embraced, may appear from the consideration of the Discourses *περὶ δευτέρου αἰτίου*, which some have endeavour'd to accommodate to *Christ*, the *second Person* in the *Holy Trinity*; For the *second Principle*

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in *Plato's* sense implies more, or rather is different from the *personal distinction* in the Trinity, as it is matter of Christian Belief. If it might be thought proper to vye Authority with Authority, I could instance in Heathens Eminent in Dignity, Morality and Learning, *Antoninus* and *Severus* who were not free from the thoughts of Polytheism, as may be conjectur'd from the Language of their publick *Professor* of Philosophy, *Alexand. Aphrod.* in his book *De fato*, p. 135. which speaks of the Deity in a plural number, and attributes Omniscience and Prescience (which is the attribute of *one* and the *only true God*) to *Dij*, or *Gods*

τὸ δὲ λέγειν ἑυλογεῖν εἶναι τοὺς θεοὺς τὰ ἐστόμενα
προσιδέναι. This Language may be

presum'd to be suited to the Empe-
rours apprehension of the Deity.

This also may be considered, *Zenophon*, who in a pleasant Dis-
course seems not altogether to
speak his own sense or Language,
but that which generally was re-
ceived, says Ζεὺς ὁ αὐτὸς δοκῶν εἶναι πολλὰς

ἐπωνυμίας ἔχει. which shews that the
Unity of this *supreme power*, was
not so apprehended to be infallib-
ly denominated *one* as δοκῶν implies,
which may not be translated *is*, but
seems, *Zenoph. in convivio*. If

this citation (as *Table Discourse*)
may seem too familiar to bear the
weight of Authority in strict ways
of arguing, let the *Authour* be

considered, when he speaks most seriously, and when an extraordinary appearance of an Enemy oblig'd his thoughts to retirement, and engaged him to Devotion, it will appear doubtful, whether he was *Theist* or *Polytheist*, at the same breath confounding *Deus* and *Dij*, beginning with the one, and ending with the other, saying these words, concluding his Oration to the Souldiers.

Καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἵπως ἄγαι ἔπως
ὅς τὰς μεγαληγορήσαντας, ὡς πλεῖον φεγνοῦντας
ταπεινώσει βέλεται, ἡμᾶς δὲ, τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν
ἐρχομένους ἐνπιμότερες ἐκείνων χεῖραςῆσαι. *Zen.*

de exped Cyri. pag. 296.

Hitherto the Deity hath been considered, as it may be said to be known to the Reasoner, and the next disquisition is. *What certain know-*

*knowledg of the nature of the Soul
and its immortality can be attain'd
by mere Reason.*

As the Eye cannot see it self
without a Mirror or Glafs, so the
Soul cannot know it self, at least as
to its duration or immortality
without Revelation. It is a diffi-
cult task to prove its existence,
much more the eternal continuati-
on of it, as appears by the *French*
Philosopher, who seems to glory of
his Invention, when he had (as he
thought) found a way to convince
the Sceptick of its distinct exi-
stence from the body. Wherefore
(according to the former method)
let his argument be examin'd,
which concludes the existence of
the Soul to be more demonstrable

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than that of the Body, because that which passes judgment on all other Beings, it self must exist. This consequence may not be deny'd, and it must be also concluded, that the Soul only passes judgment on objects, for the *corporeal Organs* are so far from discerning other objects, that without the Soul they cannot see themselves, the eyes can see no more than a pair of *Spectacles*, (if the Soul is not resident in them to judg of objects) or the Ear hear any more than an *Ω-τακουστικόν*, or the Nose smell any more than a *Censer* can the Incense which is burnt in it. This is enough to convince the Reasoner of the existence of a Spirit or *Being* in a human body which is distinct

ſtinct from it, did not the definiti-
 on, which ſays the Soul is *res cogi-*
tans, confound Reason it ſelf
 whilſt it conſiders it. For he who
 diſputes nicely or ſceptically, ac-
 cording to this definition may
 doubt whether *Brutes* may not be
res cogitantes, and conſequently
 have Souls of the *ſame kind* with
 the *humane* only differenc'd by
gradual perfection; ſeeing ſome
 in former ages have not been ſo
 Dogmatical as to conclude poſi-
 tively that *Brutes* have no kind of
 cogitation or *petty Reasonings*, as
 appears from *Plutarch's Diſcourſe*
 with this Title, Πότερ τῶν ζώων λογισμῶτε-
 ρα τὰ χροαῖα ἢ τὰ ἔνδοξα; and perhaps
 ſome in this age would not deny
 them to be *res cogitantes*, did not
 this

this consequence attend the assertion, *viz.* The *immortality* of *Brutish Souls* which the Religious man cannot or may not imagine. Let this also be considered, that this argument for the proof of the Souls existence, as much as that above cited to prove the *Being* of God, will be thought defective, for this, as others, borrows its force from a supposition, which the Sceptic will not allow, neither will the more sober man look upon that definition of a Soul as perfect, which may be accommodated to other Creatures, as it is above suggested. In the next place let an argument of a later Author, one eminent for Learning and Invention be consider'd, who says the *nature of God*
is

is as intelligible as the nature of other Beings (which assertion in some ages of the Church would have been thought a just cause of putting the Author in the Catalogue of the *Anomi* or *Anomæi*, who by some of the Fathers were esteem'd Erronious in a high degree, if not Hæretical) and also attempts to make the nature of the Soul as intelligible and as easie to be discern'd as the Sun (from which he borrows instances to express his more refin'd thoughts) whilst he defines a Spirit, a substance which hath *self penetration*, self contraction, and self dilatation in his book of the immortality of the Soul. This seems to help Reason in the conceiving the nature

ture of a Spirit, but really the Authors notion of extension is not intelligible, for it supposes the possibility of many Spirits being so contracted, that they must appear to the apprehension as one, so that the mind cannot distinguish them, and it is impossible it can, whilst they are couch't in a single superficies not divisible into another, not so much as in thought, therefore according to this method the mind must have *false apprehensions* whilst many Spirits are so contracted, that it must apprehend many *Individuals* as one *Individual* in a more confus'd conception than *Genus* and *Species* are conceiv'd, with the numerous *Beings* which are comprehended in those *terms* of
Art.

Art. Let this also be consider'd, that when *Myriads* of Spirits are confin'd to one *extension*, that being but *one* must be a substance common to *all*, so that the Spirits cannot decide *Meum* and *Tuum*, seeing by a kind of *coalition* they are united in substance. And it must be also imagin'd that the *forms* and *faculties* of those Spirits must be confus'd in one *substance* or *extension*, or at least for a time be separated from their *proper substance*, which is more difficult to be imagin'd, than the Souls taking a farwell from the Body for some short time, (which is very improbable) and then return again. It is confess'd, the Author defends his definition of a Spirit in a plausible way,

way, and perhaps will think these objections inconsiderable, however my design is answered, if it shews how Reason is confounded in framing a notion of a Spirit, which was declar'd so easie to be apprehended. If it is also said, that this is no new or monstrous assertion; for the Schools and antient Fathers have determined that Thousands of Angels may be present in the least quantity, a *point*, or if there could be any less extension: let it be consider'd, that these positions were laid down to take off the gross apprehension of the vulgar, who could scarce stretch their imagination beyond material Beings, and frame notions of Spirits suitable to them, but did never undertake to

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explain the manner, or to determine whether Spirits were *extended* or not. Hitherto the two *rational Assertors* of the Souls immortality being considered, this Disquisition shall be concluded with this consideration, *viz.* The Souls eternal duration depends on the concurrence of Divine Providence, which can conserve it or annihilate it, and this depends on God's pleasure or Will, of which the mere Reasoner must be ignorant ; wherefore it is no great wonder, if some antient Sophies spake doubtfully of the Souls immortality. That which is said is enough to shew the uncertainty of the Reasoners knowledge in his quest concerning the Soul ; but perhaps it may be urg'd,
that

that mere Reasoners, *Plato* and others have concluded its *existence* and *immortality*. This may be confest, yet the Divine sentences in their writings, which speak this, seem rather *Entbusiastick* (or at least an *innate* or *common notion*) than the deduction of the discursive faculties. For if the Divine sentences which lye scattered in *Plato's* Books, and the *media* be weigh'd by which he made those conclusions, they will seem to be a building with a glorious superstructure without a foundation proportion'd to its weight, or like an *Arch* which Mathematicians speak of, hanging in the Air, poiz'd by its own proportions, without a Buttress or foundation. *Plato's*
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sentences may give him the title *Divine*, but his reasons, by which he proves them, speak him but a *man*.

Hitherto I have discover'd Reasons defect, or dim-sight in discerning the nature of God and the Soul, it will now be proper to enter on ~~another~~ disquisition, *viz.*

Whether Grace in the Act of Faith alters the eye-sight, and in what sense Reason is laid aside.

The negative part of the first Clause of this disquisition is the Reasoners position, who concludes that Grace doth not *alter the eye-sight*, but only brings the *Object* nigher, allowing the Believer no alteration, or better disposition of the eye of his Soul, by which he

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thinks he can the better effect what he designs, *viz.* To set up every private person as an Umpire, as infallible in defining matters of faith as a Council. For by the same Reason he will not allow the eyesight alter'd in a private person, he will deny any alteration of it (which is that which makes it infallible) in a Council. Thus making the private Reasoner, and rational members of a *Council* to discover truth no otherwise than by a mere *natural sight* (*the object being brought nigher*) he concludes them equally infallible. This *project* is built on a weak foundation, which will appear to be so, by considering the unaptness or indisposition in the Soul to discern truth
from

from falsehood in Religious debates, which is plain from the vain attempts of Reason in the discovery of it. And the indisposition of the mind, which is not such as can be removed by frequent acts, which make a habit to facilitate knowledg in Arts and Sciences ; for the Soul in this case, after the utmost of its endeavours to improve its understanding, must be beholding to, or dependent on some *power* besides its own, which must help it as well as *bring the object nigher*. For if we do but consider the several ways, by which the understanding is improv'd, we must conclude it is not by its own power. For the believers Soul must have Divine aid or assistance either *mediate* or

immediate in the act of Faith which must be call'd *Grace*; which if it be only suppos'd to dispose the *Organs*, as there is a necessity of it in *mad men*, and those which are *Fools* only by a bodily defect, which renders those parts useless which were designed for the service of the Soul in the exercise of her Functions, it is more than *bringing the object nigher*. Logicians (which is only a hard name for rational men) say there is *potentia prima*, which renders a blind man as capable of seeing, if the *Organs* were well disposed, as he who hath a perfect sight. And those who say all Souls are equal, conclude the fault is in the *Organs* (if a man after the utmost of industry

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joyned with advantage) is a Fool for this Reason, because his Soul is as capable of knowledg, as that of the greatest Sophies. This instance will agree with the Reasoner's case, who will allow no man to be a Spiritual Fool but on his own default, wherefore he stretches the interpretation of *luxuriosus*, to signifie the *sensual man*, which cannot be allowed; for if he mean the *debaucht Epicure*, then it would follow that every *sober man* would be assured of finding truth: for if there is not any fault in the eye of Reason (sensuality according to his assertion being removed) what can hinder? for if the eye is well disposed, and the object nigh, the eye cannot but see. This is

so certain, that there is a natural necessity of it, but the case is otherwise in discerning spiritual truth. For the most sober Heathens have complained they were in darkness.

——— *Quantum mortalia cæca
Pectora noctis habent?* ——— —

The natural frame and indisposition of the mind occasioned this invincible ignorance, which may be so call'd, seeing it cannot be removed by humane Art or Industry, any more than a *mad man* can restore himself to a *right mind*.

That God can improve the understanding is as evident as he can render it less perfect, which is plain from the punishment of our first fore-

forefather, who by his default forfeited much of his Reasoning faculty which was less perfect than in innocency; This cannot be denied, although the manner how the *natural light* was diminisht, may puzzle those who will strictly examine it: For to diminish the understanding according to those who make *cogitation* the *form of the Soul*, is to make it to be *less a Soul*, which will not be allowed in Logick or Metaphysicks, or according to that opinion which calls it a *faculty* or *power* of the mind to draw conclusions, it is hard to imagine how it should be disabled, except God uncreate or withdraw some perfection, or at least his *Grace* or *Divine assistance*, which is as much

if not more necessary for preserving it in its due exercise of Reason in Religious debates, than the concurrence of providence which hinders the World from turning to its *first nothing*. The former opinion cannot be allowed, the latter if granted, will serve for the proof of the former assertion, for if it be (as it must be) allow'd that God hath and can make the Soul less perfect by withdrawing his Grace, he can, and doth improve it by supplies of the same; also The truth of this cannot be denyed, although it may seem obscure, if it meet with the Reasoner, who perhaps will be as much puzzled with the word *Grace*, as he is with the word *Schism*. Which demur will soon

soon be removed if Grace be taken for *Divine assistance*, which perfects the understanding, although the manner how it is done, cannot be otherwise than conjecturally expressed; For the strict Reasoner says, if the matter of Fact be certain, *whats* and *hows*, ~~not~~^{are} ~~and~~ not to hinder assent; wherefore it being proved that there is a necessity of Divine assistance, 'tis not so necessary to examine strictly the manner any more, than when we take it granted, that a *Spirit* can act on *matter* though the invention cannot imagine *how*, It is enough to conclude the truth of the former assertion, if God in the Act of faith do only excite notions in the mind, not only by proposal of objects
nigher,

nigher, but by direction of the *wil* to give its *assent*, without which these notions or conclusions would have been dormant, or at least doubtfully entertain'd by mere Reason following its own conduct. Before I dispatch this part of the Disquisition, it is necessary to prevent what may be objected from the former instance, *viz.* If *Adam* in his *pure naturals* had a distinct knowledg of God, and consequently could have assented to all the Articles of Religion without any other assistance than the bare proposal of them with appeals to his own Reason, laying aside sensuality (which must be allow'd to be the occasion of his fall without straining *Cabalistical Divinity*,
which

which calls it *forbidden fruit*) so his posterity may by abstracting their thoughts from sensual objects arrive at the same degree of perfection: This granted (which cannot be) will not qualifie the Reasoner for Christian belief; for could he suppose himself indow'd with the same faculties with which *innocency* was invested, he will be but a *Viator* (as the Schools say) more imperfect than the Christian, not a *Comprehensor* of matters of faith. Some *Scholasticks* have been so far from concluding, that the knowledg which *Adam* had of God at least as *Triunus*, was purely natural, that they doubted not to call it infus'd, for this reason (as well as the Authority of St. *Austin*. lib. *undec.*

undec. de Genesi ad liter. because it is not probable that God would suffer the *Protoplast* to be ignorant of that which was matter of faith to all his posterity ; And it may be safely concluded, that *Adam's* Christian posterity give assent to the whole Sacred Volume of Scripture by the same method and means by which *Adam* assented to, and believ'd that *Synopsis* of the whole Gospel, *The seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpents head.* If it is said that *Adam's* posterity have a measure of knowledg, as much greater than that of their first forefather, as the *second Adam* is justly exalted above the first ; yet this advance of knowledg owes not its Original to mere *natural powers.*
For

For though the *Christian Believer* (without breach of modesty) may be said to know more than his *first Forefather* ; yet that higher degree of knowledg doth not only owe its improvement to a fuller declaration of *God's Will* in the latter, than in the *first Gospel* preacht to *Adam* by God himself, but also to the *Divine supplies*, which are proportion'd to the extent of the Revelation ; otherwise the Christian could no more believe his larger *Creed*, than it can be imagin'd, *Adam* could have comprehended the sum of it, declar'd to him in few words without Divine interpretation or assistance.

If this instance seem not close to the question, let the *will* and the
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understanding be two eyes of faith, though by some one is called blind *Cæca potestas*, which error is corrected by later Philosophy) be examin'd, and they will in their pure naturals be found defective. For as in naturals 'tis not enough that the eye is well disposed, but a certain position of the object, and direction of the eye is necessary for some Discoveries, so although 'tis allow'd that Reason is no more *new Reason* by *Grace*, than an eye is *a new eye*, which by skilful directions discerns that which it saw not before; yet this assistance though it do not frame sight, but direct the eye, 'tis enough to destroy that position which says in *spiritual Vision* *only the object is brought nigher.*

Add

Add to this the mere disposal of *Media* in order to perfect Vision and it will give way for this assertion, that Divine assistance is necessary, for we must acknowledg, that several *conclusions* have been passed as true which before were doubted of, when a quick and happy invention hath found a fit *medium* to prove them, or at least render them more easie to be understood. To instance in that which is nearest to man, his own Soul, its existence is better apprehended by being compared to some *thin air*, which hath power, though invisible. Besides it is beyond dispute, that some supernatural power infuseth notions in dreams, which the Soul it self could not excite. I dispute not
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whether there are any such in these days, 'tis enough to shew, that the Divine method without violence to Reason hath made such discoveries in some ages of the Church, and may continue his assistance (though not in the same manner, for that would not appear consistent with the settled and more perfect state of the Church) to help Reason in giving its assent to *Divine truth*. I need add no more for the confutation of the Reasoners position than the proposal of the Discourse in the former disquisition, which shews that there is a *Beam* in the eye of Reason, which if not removed, renders it so dim-sighted that it cannot discern the *Elements* and first *principles* of Religion,

Religion, which are rudely in mans mind, and need some assistance for the due compofure of the thoughts concerning God and his worship; wherefore let the Reasoner confider Grace but as a Chirurgians hand which couches a *Pearl* on the eye, or takes away the *Gutta ferena*; Yet by this act the fight is better, and this cannot be without alteration. Add to this the propofal of objects and the difpofition of the eye and media (which the eye it felf cannot difpofe) is enough to fhew that Grace by fuch acts may be faid to have *alter'd* the *fight*, which might be rendred obfcure and confused by default of the *medium* or Organ; for as the Soul looks through the

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eye as a Glafs, which if fullied or discolour'd by any Disease, the judgment is pass'd according to the tincture which is in the eye, not in the object, and consequently is as ill a Judg of colours, as he who views objects with *colour'd Prospectives* or any *Catoptrical device* to deceive the eye; so in spiritual Vision the Soul looks with the eyes which have the disease, therefore 'tis not probable it should discern its own malady, much less discover truth. To conclude this part of the Disquisition, it may be confidently affirmed that Grace *alters* the *sight*, though it do but take off a *film* or *scale*, as from St. *Paul's* eyes, which

which the natural man by his own power is no more able to remove than the eye by dropping tears (a way to put out eyes rather than restore them) can do as much as any *eye-water* which the *Oculist* can prepare.

From what is here said, there is an easie digression to the other part of the Disquisition (*how Reason is laid aside* in some acts of Faith (a question which much exercised the *Reconciler*) whilst it doth not follow the dictates of its own understanding, but gives it self up to the guidance of another, (*the Divine knowledg*) which advantageously supplies natures defect, which makes way for this conclusion, *viz.* Reason in some cases is

as much and may as properly be said to be *laid aside*, as a Judg who is limited by his Monarch, that he may not pass sentence in all cases on his own judgment, but in some must consult and follow the directions of the supreme Magistrate, by doing of which he is so far *laid aside*, that as to that particular case, he may not so properly be called *Judg* as a *Proclaimer* of Justice determined by his Superiour. And for the illustration, I cannot but insert a story which I borrow from an Eminent Mathematician who says, a Judg puzzled with a Case of two persons who had made exchange of *Fields* which were *Iso-perimeters*, or of equal sides but different figures, one a *Rombus* or
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oblique Angled, the other *a square or right Angled parallelogram*, was necessitated to call a *Geometrician* to discover the Cheat, which discovery in strictness was enough to call the Mathematician *Judg*, though the sentence was pronounced by *another*. This is applicable to the Spiritual method of improving the understanding and determining the Will in matters of faith, if God be considered as the μέγας γνώστης to inform Reason which is defective, and as ignorant as the *Judg* in the former Case.

From this instance 'tis plain and easie to imagine how advantageously Reason is *laid aside*, being diverted from its usual method in giving assent to propositions

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(which are true) yet in themselves not sufficiently evident, now *evidence* of the truth to the Soul in its pure naturals is so necessary, that there is no *assent* certain without it, but it is otherwise in the act of faith, when *Divine Testimony* supplies the place of *natural evidence*. If it be urged that Reason proceeds according to it's own *principles*, and when it submits to the *Divine Testimony*, 'tis because Reason is informed by Revelation, That it is not a Competent Judge of Religious Mysteries; yet that assent being guided by the *Divine Testimony* instead of *evidence*, diverting the faculties of the Soul from their usual method, is enough to assert, *Reasons being laid aside*.

Yet

Yet this will not make way for a cavilling complaint, that the Divine determination doth violence to the faculties whilst thus diverted from their usual method, for the *Divine concurrence* which determines them, can no more be said to do violence, than the *Mathematicians* information of the Judge in the former case can be called compulsion when he prevailed with him to pass true sentence, which he without the Artist could not have pronounc't.

It is not necessary that matters of belief are clearly and distinctly understood, for faith takes its name from *perswasion* (which is not always begotten by demonstration,) and from assent more than from the

manner how it is wrought ; for the Divine method hath several ways to command belief, sometimes it makes an *ex tempore Convert*, grace working effectually in a moment, sometimes it operates through the whole course of mans life to perfect the work. It is enough that men are assured that their assent is terminated in *truth*, because of the Divine determination which makes the Will like the Load-stone (which instance is much used by the Reconciler) which will certainly conduct the Mariner, though he knows not how it is directed, whether by a *materia subtilis*, passing through the *poles* of this *low vortex*, or any other mysterious way of nature. To speak all, if

Sailing

Sailing had been *laid aside* till the Pilot could demonstrate its *infallible direction* from its causes, the greater part of the World would have been unknown, and the *terra incognita* would take more room in the Mapp than the known part of the World: The same may be concluded of faith, for if all belief was to be suspended until the manner how it was wrought was explained, a great part of the World would pass as Infidels.

Thus far the infirmity of the mere *natural sight* hath been discovered, it now remains that I inquire in what sense the Reconciler, who urgeth belief as an *Act of Prudence*, by which if he only understand a rational choice excluding

cluding grace, the former discourse will equally conclude against *him* and the Reasoner. For if a man endued with natural Prudence, must necessarily embrace the Christian Religion, because its contents are such as will command assent from the Reasonable man, he shuts out Grace in the *Act* of *Faith*, and makes the Holy Scriptures more *sufficient*, and in another sense than ever they were said to be (for which they are said to be so (αὐτάρκεις εἰσὶν ἀγία γραφὰ πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπαγγελίαν, by *Athanasius*, *Cyril*, and other holy Fathers) it is to shew they are *self-sufficient* without the subsidies of Traditions not in any other sense ; for although it must be granted that the proposal of Scripture

ture is enough to condemn the Infidel as imprudent ; yet this condemnation may not be justified only, because the evidence of Scripture was not allow'd, for it is more than probable that the neglect of Petitioning for Grace, and opposing it when offered, to help unbelief, doth adjust the severity of that saying, *He who believes not shall be damn'd.* Natural Prudence is not a sufficient qualification for the embracing Christian Religion, if we take it in *Aristotles* sense, who defines it an habitual knowledg which can discern what is *good* and what is *evil* as they have relation to practice. *lib. Sexto Ethicor. ad Nicom.* λέγειται ἀπὸ

ἀνθρώπου

αὐτῷ εἶναι ἔξιν, ἀληθῆ μετὰ λόγου πρακτικῶς περὶ
τὰ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακά.

Prudence thus defin'd can have no place as Antecedent to belief, because that mere Reason in several Cases cannot judge, what is *good* for man, and what *evil*, and therefore will demur at some duties absolutely necessary for the attaining of happiness, such as are *self-denial* and other injunctions which natural prudence will not choose, if left to its own evidence. And if it be considered as subsequent to belief, there is no need of it in discerning what is good in practice and what is evil, for duties in Religion are *indispensably* enjoined, which destroys *consultation*, which denominates a man *Prudent*. I shall
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conclude this particular with Christ's deciding the Controversie by ranking the *Prudent man*, in this sense not so *wise as a Babe*, without Divine assistance. And when it is taken in a better sense, Divine direction and concurrence is suppos'd as necessary to supply the defect of the mind (and therefore may challenge the Etymology which *Aristotle* gives of σοφισάντων whilst he calls it σώζουσιν τὴν φρόνησιν) which God alone is able to do, *and make men wise unto Salvation*. Add to this another consideration, that a *Prudential choice* of Religion, supposes it and its reward too, to be exposed as a *prize*, not in the Apostolical sense. So that he who hath the greatest stock of Prudence

dence must pass as most Religious, when he who hath the least, be esteem'd a Reprobate.

From all that is said I shall only infer this conclusion, seeing our eye-sight needs alteration and it self is indispos'd, the Believer doth safely resign himself to the conduct of the *All-seeing-eye*, according to the Rule of a severe Philosopher (who would not admit any truth, but upon the evidence of Reason) who says, we may in some Cases as safely trust others as our selves, εἴθεν γὰρ δοίσει αὐτὸς εἶχεν ἢ ἄλλοις εἶχεν πείθεσθαι, *Arist. lib. Sext. Ethic. ad Nicom.* So far as men follow an unerring conduct, so far they are infallible, though they are not their own Leaders.

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Hitherto Reason hath been considered as it is in a single person, but the following Disquisition considers it in a multitude, or an Assembly as it attends their *Sacred Votes*, by which it is made more infallible, than when as a Monarch, it asserts its seeming priviledges by renouncing all manner of assistance in drawing conclusions, but only that, which mere nature affords, relying on private evidence, which also is suppos'd in every particular Member of a Council. Therefore it is proper to examine *whether Reason only, inlightned by apprehending the story and contents of the old and new Testaments, is capable of appeals made to it as Judg, and the last determiner of*
 Con-

Controversies, so as it can pass infallible judgment on propositions offer'd as Revelation: And whether the fallibility of some Councils renders all so suspicious that the Christian cannot safely rely on Conciliary definitions.

The first branch of this inquiry is affirmed by the Reasoner, and the other he will not have deny'd, because it makes way for the proof of the former, for by insinuating that all Councils are fallible, he presumes he may as well appeal to a *fallible self*, as a *fallible multitude*. But this assertion may be checkt from this consideration; That there is much difference between these Propositions; *General Councils may err*; And, *All have been*

been and are lyable to Error. If the latter is granted, it will destroy the certainty of a visible Church at any time since it was founded, if not the being of any truly so called. For that principle which obligeth a man to believe, that all Councils have been fallible, will never put him out of doubt, whether the profession of the Church at any time was agreable to the truth of Religion. For seeing the Reasoners rule admits of nothing as certain, further than it is knowable by some faculty of the Soul, independent from Divine assistance, it is impossible that he can have any more than *conjectural knowledg*, Reason being not able to inform him of a *Criterion* of a

N true

true Church by its own evidence, but by Revelation, which says the *true faith shall not fail*. Now that this true faith is in a doubtful case, must be determin'd by those who have power from God to make a certain discovery of it. That which is said, is so agreeable to the Apostolical rule, *no Scripture is of private interpretation*, (which must be confest by the Reasoner, though there was no Sacred Authority to confirm that Canon) that it is only necessary that objections are remov'd. The first of which may be this, that by the delivery of Reason in private persons to be determin'd by that which prevails in a multitude, is to make or set up a *Rational Papacy*. For as each

Mem.

Member of the Roman Church is no further esteem'd Orthodox than he delivers up his private reason either to the *Pope alone*, or as he is in *juncto* with a general Council, which is said to have such power to determine infallibly, though the interpretation make *Scripture* to be no *Scripture*; So every Christian is to be esteem'd Orthodox or Hæretical according to the sense of the Council, which hath power to interpret and make his *reason* to be no *reason*.

No such conclusion can follow, and if it did, it would not break the force of the arguments, which confirm the former positions. For suppose the *Definitions* of Councils as *conclusions*, which Reason draws

from the *premises*, nor as none can be so rash as to say, Reason makes the *conclusion* true which was so before, (only it could not commend it to the *will* and *understanding*, as an object of *natural faith*, till the *two propositions* were brought as *witnesses* of the truth of the conclusion,) or that *Logick* creates truth, but only assists the invention in its search for it ; so by the same reason none may say, that Councils make Articles of true Religion, though they are the means of their discovery.

But let this objection be consider'd as it relates to *Papal Decretals*. The name Pope will never affright the sober man out of that reverence which is due to just Authority,

thority, *Councils and holy Synods*, or if it be found to be so in a *single person*. For if it could be prov'd (as some have affirm'd) that the Pope was and is the *Church Virtual*, it would be beyond dispute, that infallibility did at some time since Christian Religion was in the World, sit in the *Chair*, or at least may do, when fundamental controversies arise, which threaten the Churches ruine without the imputation of making *Scripture to be no Scripture* by his Authority. It may be safely said by any Christian, that he would not give assent to several Doctrines which are urg'd as matters of faith necessarily to be believ'd for the attaining Salvation, did not the Church declare them to

be so; yet the same person on the same principle is not oblig'd to think, that which is so defin'd by the Church is made true by its definition. Hitherto I have us'd this comparison (which makes the determinations of Councils as conclusions of a Syllogism made by the *Heads of the World*) to illustrate the answer to an objection; but it being so apposit to another design, it shall be us'd to shew, that the Reasoner in a Council is not capable of making a Syllogism from mere *natural Topicks* to demonstrate the truth of that which is debated. This will appear to be true from the consideration of the Structure of a Syllogism, which leads us to the knowledg of a proposition

position, which was less known, by others which are more evident, and easie to be understood. For the *medium* (which is an ingredient of both propositions) is as clear and as certain as a *common notion*, and the truth of the conclusion depends on it, which if *mistaken*, makes the Syllogism a *fallacy*. Suppose therefore the Members of a Council as so many *Scholasticks* arguing, they have no such *common notions* as Philosophers have, by which as *media*, they can draw conclusions. Although it must be confest that the *understanding* by its *own evidence* can judg of the truth of some propositions (viz. *It is impossible, God can do any act which implyes a contradiction, &c.*

Yet Divine Revelation is the *medium* by which truth in propositions, which are more obscure, is determined. Hence it follows that the *Sanctions* and *Definitions* of Councils must be said to be *Hypothetically pronounc'd true*, as this saying is, *viz.* If the Moon is Eclipsed, the Earth interposeth it self between it and the Sun. Not unlike this is the way of arguing in a Council, which proves Christ's humanity from his Passion; for if he suffereth, humane nature did interpose it self, else he could not suffer. Now as none will say, there is and always was a necessity ~~not~~ in the nature of the Moon, but in the manner of its motion, that it must be Eclipsed at some times (for to
say

say so, is to confine the Almighty's wisdom to one *System*, and to take away the possibility of the Worlds being in such a frame in which neither Sun or Moon might be Eclipsed) but when it is seen to be so, it is evident, that the Earths *interposition* is the *cause* of that seeming defect. So a Council cannot conclude the necessity of *Christ* being *Man* but *Hypothetically* ; For the *Divine decrees* (which reason cannot know but by Revelation) are as the *condition* or *antecedent* which makes *Christ's humanity* necessary. Let not this assertion seem strange, since it is impossible, but that reason must be defective as it appears from the former instance, as also from this consideration, that
 the

the mere Reasoner cannot conclude the necessity of Christs incarnation, and will be more at a loss in other mysterious matters of faith. The definitions and conclusions of Councils thus hypothetically drawn are not less certain, because they are such, seeing the *Antecedents* of their *propositions* are *matters of fact* contain'd in holy Scriptures, and those who discourse, have Divine assistance in discerning the *connexion* and inferring the *consequences*; Now the *connexion* and *sequel* is true, because of the Divine direction, as is already prov'd, and the *Antecedent*, *viz.* matters of fact, is so, as it appears from the miracles which confirm'd their truth, which were such

as

as reason might discern to be Divine; for Reason may be allow'd a Judg in this case, though not in all doubts which come under debate in a Council. The reason of which is this, Miracles being works which exceed mere natural power or ordinary course of nature, it is furnished with faculties which can discern what is natural, and what not, but is at a loss in higher mysteries.

This assertion perhaps may be checkt by an instance in *conciliary* proceedings in discerning *Canonical Books* of Holy Scripture from *Apocryphal*, or any falsely so called, in which, judgment is pass'd by mere rational evidence, whilst it distinguisheth the one from the other by
their

their *Contents*. This must not be granted: for though the *contents* of *Holy Scriptures* are a good argument of their truth; yet they are not the only *Characteristicks* to distinguish them from others which are not *Canonical*. When there is any debate in a Council concerning any part of Scripture to be admitted into Canon, appeals are not made to mere Reason to judg of its contents, any further than by comparison of them with those of other Books, which are received without any controverſie. It is the Councils buſineſs to argue as the Apoſtolicall Canon ſays
 ἀνακρινέτωσαν ἀλλήλοις τὰ δογματὰ τῆς ἐκπαιδείας;
 and the *Church of England* concludes the definitions of Councils
 de-

deductions of Reason (*Artic. 21*) which admits of this limitation or rather interpretation, that though Reason draws the conclusions ; yet their truth is not measur'd by a *bare congruity* to it, but the reception of it in the primitive Church, or the most *free and unbiassed Councils*, and so much of it as belongs to the Old Testament by the *Jewish Catalogue*, and by several other Rules, which are as a *Touchstone* to discover Gold, and distinguish it from baser Mettals. To speak all, *Conciliary Discussions* in this case do not inquire how Revelation is agreeable to Reason, but what is to be admitted as Revelation, and what to be rejected, and when that is done, compare one Text with another

another till they agree, which *consent* is the most *infallible evidence* of truth. However it is scarce probable, that the Reasoner will be perswaded or argued out of his pretended private infallibility, whilst he concludes, every individual man may proceed on the same ground which *Councils* do, because each rational man being in some degree more or less able to draw conclusions by Analogy, or comparing the several *contents of Holy Scriptures*. Wherefore let it be suppos'd, that each reasonable man is naturally qualified to find truth; yet seeing the promise of Divine assistance (which is the most sure foundation on which infallibility can rest) is not to a *single person*,
those

those *natural qualifications* cannot assure them of finding it.

I am sensible that the Reasoner may take occasion from what is said of urging a question, whether the former assertion doth take the privilege from every private person, so that in any case he cannot interpret Scripture.

The affirmative of this question may be safely maintain'd as it hath respect to private persons who are known Members of the Church, and have opportunity of being acquainted with, and to be inform'd, what is the interpretation and sense of the Church in general, which must be a direction to those who pass judgment in particular cases, for they may not appeal from
Synods

Synods to their own private reason, and because truth is certainly to be found in Councils, and there are Rules of finding it.

If it is further demanded, whether a private person who hath neither learning or opportunity to understand the sense of the Church, may not be a safe interpreter of Scripture in order to his own Satisfaction and Salvation?

As this proposes an extraordinary case, so the answer may be dubiously return'd. However it may be said to the first part of the question, that it cannot be well supposed, that any illiterate person should of necessity be ignorant of the sense of the Church, seeing he is a *known Member* of the same,
and

and the *Pastors* are as *Mouths* to declare it. To the other part of the question, which supposes a Christian so unfortunately (amongst the Infidels) plac'd, that he cannot have access to *Pastors* of the Church, it is enough to propose another question, *viz.* Whether the Thief on the Cross who may be supposed to want time (though nothing more could be wanting whilst Christ was with him) did give assent to all fundamentals of Religion by faith as *explicit* as is required of other Christians who have the advantage of more time and other circumstances? The answer given to this will help the solution of the other doubt.

The manner of *Conciliary* proceedings

ceedings being considered, and the unfitness of the mere Reasoner for such debates; in the next place the necessity of Councils shall be prov'd, by which the other part of the Disquisition will be better understood.

Such *Sacred Assemblies* are necessary, though not at all times (for some ages pass't without them) for the exigency of the Church requires such supplies. To imagine it could always be without them, is to conclude it exempt from all possibility of erring, and independent as to the Divine conduct, which is promis'd to *lead it* and *continue it* in the way of truth; The former cannot be granted, for *Heresies must be*, and then there is as
great

great necessity of their condemnation. The latter cannot be allow'd, for as it intrenches on the *Divine Dominion*, so it doth equalize the *Church Militant* with the *Triumphant*, whose greatest Triumph is over Error.

This necessity of Councils is confirm'd from the consideration of different opinions concerning *matters of faith*, which equally commend themselves to the Christian, and render his *Will* so *indifferent*, that he knows not to which part to incline, till determined by Authority. It is no strange thing to meet with two opinions in other cases, which plead for themselves with such equal probability, that the most accurate judgment

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will rather suspend its belief, than give assent to either ; neither let it appear a prodigy, if Religion afford such cases as would render its *profelytes* or *professors* *sceptically* puzzled without a more *infallible guide* than their own Reason.

But it may be said, that in other cases the wise men do not give themselves up to a *Seet* or *Council* of Philosophers to be *Umpires* in dubious matters. This is granted, for it is unreasonable that they should deliver up their Reason to the most fam'd Sophies, but the reason is not the same in Religious debates. For a single person may be qualifi'd for finding truth in Philosophy, with such certainty as may vie with the numerous *Seets* ;
but

but no private member of the Church may pretend to that certainty which must be allow'd in Councils. It is possible that one man may be master of more reason and Philosophy than is to be found in all the World at that time, and one *walking Library* more valuable than a *Vatican*; but Religious knowledg is not design'd to be so *Monastical* as to live in solitude or a single person. Besides, if it could be prov'd that the Philosophers had the same assurance of a true conduct in their doubts by *reason*, which the *Councils* have by *Divine supplies*, he would be unreasonable in a high degree who would not give up or resign his private reason to their determinations.

The *great assertor* of the Roman Church (*D. Stap.*) was not altogether mistaken when he introduc't Divine assistance to help the Church in making a Syllogism (though the manner of its conveyance seems inconsistent, whilst he makes the Members of it to be *discursive* in the *premises* as mere Reasoners, but *infallibly assisted* in the *conclusion*) for Revelation must take place of pure natural invention in the whole matter of Religious debates.

That there is a necessity of the Resignation of Reason to Authority must be granted, and it is urg'd by several methods. Two late Authors (who *consider'd* and *examin'd humane Reason*) endeavour

to convince men of the necessity of giving up our private reason to the publick judgment of other persons, *who have better means of knowing of truth than we our selves have*, as one expresseth it, and both press it by an instance of an *appeal in naturals from sense to reason*. This way of arguing may be perswasive, but not cogent enough to evince men of the necessity of that which they design'd to prove; for although it is safely concluded that the Members of Councils have better qualifications for discovery of truth than private persons; yet their learning and natural endowments are not that *ἡσυχασμῶ* or the foundation on which faith is laid.

Besides the similitude of appeals from *Sense* to *Reason* is not apposit, and implies a supposition of the senses being erroneous, which in strictness cannot be allow'd, but let that be suppos'd, it cannot well be accommodated to the case, for sense and reason in man are not so much strangers as the publick *Representatives* of the Church in Councils are to its particular Members. The same *perceptient* is imploy'd in reason and sense, and according to its different acts and objects hath distinct compellations, *sensual* or *rational*, as the same River takes several names from the Channels through which it runs. For when the Soul perceives *material impresses* on the
Brain

Brain without any consideration or *reflex act*, it is call'd *sensation* (as when it perceives a body as it is figur'd in that part which nature design'd for Phancy, to be *Triangular* or *Globular*, *red* or *white*, or as it is represented in other figures or colours) but when it deliberates and draws conclusions, such as cannot be the work or result of a naked representation of the object, it challengeth its just title *rational*. Now to suppose this similitude exactly apposit, is to conclude that every *private person* should have his Soul imployd and acting (a *junto* which cannot be imagin'd) in every particular debate of a Council as the *percipient* is in sensation and Reasoning.

More

More arguments might be urg'd to evince the necessity of Councils, but I do not intend to be so voluminous, but to pass to another inquiry concerning truth and its certainty of being so, as it is in lawful Councils. Satisfaction will be given to this inquiry, if it is considered that *the true faith was once delivered to the Saints as St. Jude* says, and what that true faith is may be found in some conciliary Definitions since Christ's coming into the World, and that it may be safely concluded, that it is found when there is a general consent, which is an infallible *κρίσις* and as certain as any *medium* in Demonstration. Suppose one true opinion in Philosophy and a Thousand in which there

there is truth, but mixt with error ;
 If they all agree in some positions
 it is an undoubted argument of the
 truth of those in which all agree.
 This way of passing judgment on
 Definitions of Councils upon exa-
 mination will appear as certain as
 that which draws conclusions from
 this rule. *Quæ in aliquo tertio con-
 veniunt inter se conveniunt.* That
 trite saying *μία ἀλήθεια ἀμάρτημα πολυτρόπος*
 is more than a proverbial conclusi-
 on, for it is founded in reason,
 which must conclude error hath
 many *Mæanders* and *distracting*
paths : but truth hath a *narrow way*,
 in which only it self can walk.
 And it must needs be so for this
 reason ; truth being in some *Con-
 ciliary Definitions*, they must be
 as

as the *Center* in which, all which are true, necessarily meet. If it is said, that it is possible that those *Definitions*, which are to be as a *Standard* to measure others, may not be found, the Church being defrauded or abus'd by misfortune or cunning, and consequently at a loss in the search for truth, as much as he who sails without a *Compass*.

This cannot be suppos'd because of the Divine promise of the preservation of the *true faith*, though not at all times discoverable. But let it be imagin'd that some *true Conciliary Definitions* may be wanting, then the *supposition* is destroy'd, which implyes a *Catholick consent*, which cannot be so call'd, if but one Definition is left out:
Therefore

Therefore it may be concluded that Truth is to be found by this Method; though with as much difficulty as *Archimedes* discovered the Gold, and the quantity of it in his Princes Crown, which a *Cheat* had *Adulterated* with baser Metals.

Religion therefore being in its own frame and nature fitted for the severest Inquisition, it will not stand in fear of the boldest Adversary, Authority in its name bids the Reasoner be modest, and its matter which it enjoyns further commands him to be so, whilst he speaks of that which transcends his understanding. It may now seem proper to suggest these Arguments which seem to invalidate
 Autho.

Authority, and render it less valuable ; This is done by objecting the errors of Councils , and the manner of their Process by *Votes* or *Suffrages* ; the first of which seems to insinuate to the Christian, the possibility of the body of the Church being altogether disjointed , and its total Apostacy with the same reason that a man may conclude that man-kind cannot be exempt from the possibility of being *Cripples* , because that *some bones* have been out of their *proper place*, and the other seems to render them more contemptible, by comparing them with *Processes* of *Courts* which are *purely humane* ; both these are as easily confuted as named, and may be

be more effectually retorted on reason, as it is exercised in the several ways of Government in several ages. For the former objection is removed in the precedent Disquisition, and the other will appear to be weak and disabled, if it is considered that *Votes* and *Suffrages* in holy Councils are as *Lots* in the choice of an Apostle, which having *infallible Direction* from God may vie certainty with a Decree or any way of Election. *Matthias* was no less an *Apostle*, neither was his Authority more doubted, with which he was invested by *Lots*, than that of the other Apostles, who had an *oral mission* from Christ himself. I might further assert Ecclesiastical

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Authority, by shewing the safety of relying on the Authority of Councils with a more firm assent than History or the humane Law-giver can challenge; For the Historian(I mean the profane) commits not Annals to posterity upon peril of his own ruine, in case some cunning and political inventions be interwoven in them like some of the History which *Zenophon* wrote, which seems more like a Romance than an impartial Relation of *Cyrus* his Life and Education; and those who give precepts to other men, sometimes have a reserve of immunity, and exemption from them to themselves: But holy Councils have no such equivocation, which though it may seem *pious deceit*,
must

cannot sit safely in *Sacred Assemblies*, neither may any Members of them as an *Arian* profess one, and carry another *Creed* in his Bosome: were it possible that any Member of a true Council might do this safely and without peril of his own ruine, *Conciliary Definitions* might be rendered more suspicious, but the case is otherwise in such *Sacred debates*, the Members of Councils as well as private persons of the Church are like *St. Paul* and his *Company* in the Ship which could not be secured from the Tempest, *If all were not saved*, or at least in a capacity of being so, for as the Apostle might not escape upon a

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Planck

Planck alone ; neither may the *publick representatives of the universal Church* promise themselves Salvation, if they willingly define any such matters of faith to the people as may indanger the making Shipwrack of a good Conscience relying on their Authority. For those who out of design define error as matters of faith , are in equal danger , if not more, with those who put their *Definitions* in practice.

Hence appears the certainty of that knowledg which is the effect of faith, which as much exceeds that which is purely humane, as *Science* doth *Opinion*, which is such a low and fickle degree of knowledg

ledg as seems suited for trifling
 things below Heavenly objects; for
 God hath disposed of Religious
 matters in such manner, as that a
 man may know God, and be in-
 form'd of his own duty with as
 great certainty, if not greater,
 than he can know the objects of
natural Science. For the diffe-
 rence which the Schools make be-
 tween Faith and Science consists
 not only in the *certainty* of the one
 being greater than the other, but
 in the *manner of evidence* in the
 objects, which occasions the grand
 cavil against faith, as being an un-
 reasonable peice of service im-
 pos'd on man, and *which is to give*
assent to that which cannot com-

mend it self to the understanding with sufficient evidence.

If this is urged, it may be retorted upon *Science*, for if nothing must command assent (as it is before said) but what is *clearly and distinctly perceiv'd*, *Euclid's Demonstrations* must be less in number, and more maim'd; and there will be only the name of *Science* of many things left in the world. Besides there is no reason of complaint of want of *evidence* in the act of faith, for it is *evidence enough, that the mind is inform'd that it cannot comprehend its object, however it ought to give assent.* Let this be made more plain by a supposition: Suppose a
Terra

Terra incognita (I do not mean that which Geographers call so, for that in future ages may have a new name in the Map) or some part of the world was so design'd and contriv'd by the Creator, that it is impossible it should be known : Or suppose there were *Planetary Regions habitable*, but not intended to be discover'd clearly to man, 'tis enough in this feigned case, that men are inform'd that there are such places, and advis'd of the impossibility that they should be known. This fiction is applicable to more serious and Religious cases, and may stop the mouths of a querulous *Generation of seekers*, who are content with a low degree

of knowledg, which doth not excell opinion in certainty, which kind of knowledg was so little esteem'd amongst some of the Philosophers, that it was plac't by them in the *imagination*, rather than the *understanding*, as better suiting with the condition of *Brutes* than *men*. 'Tis true the Schools have been more kind and curteous to *Opinion*, and gave it a place in the *Understanding*, but being there according to their account of it, *sits trembling and in fear it may be deceiv'd, and that which it apprehends to be true may be false*; This consider'd will exalt faith (which in a loose description, may be call'd Reason
Di-

Divinely assisted and directed)
above mere carnal Reasonings,
and justify the challenge which
St. Paul makes in his Christian
Armour, *where is the Disputer of*
the World?

F I N I S.

H. T.